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# HORNY HANDS AND HAMPERED ELBOWS

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Whiting Williams

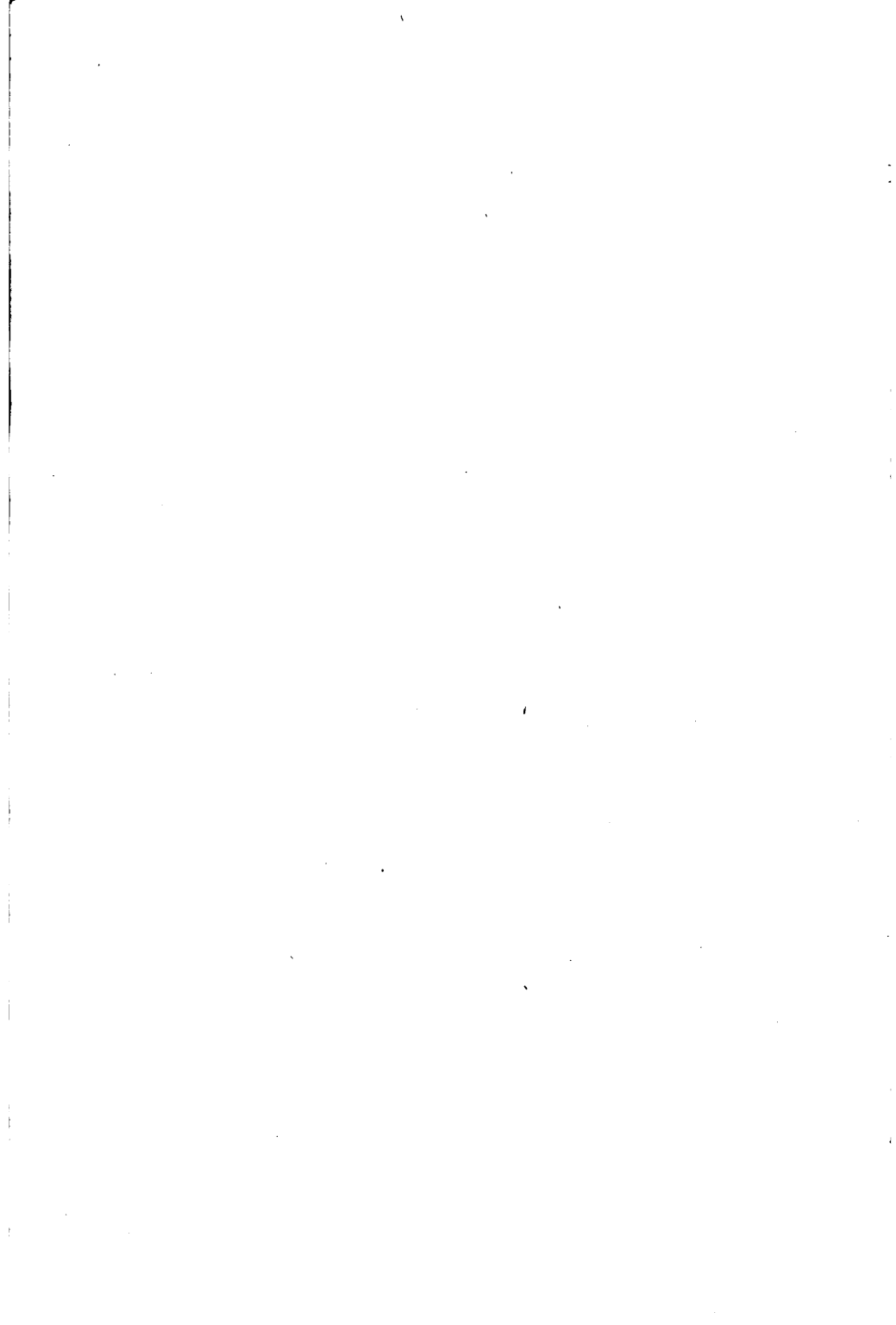
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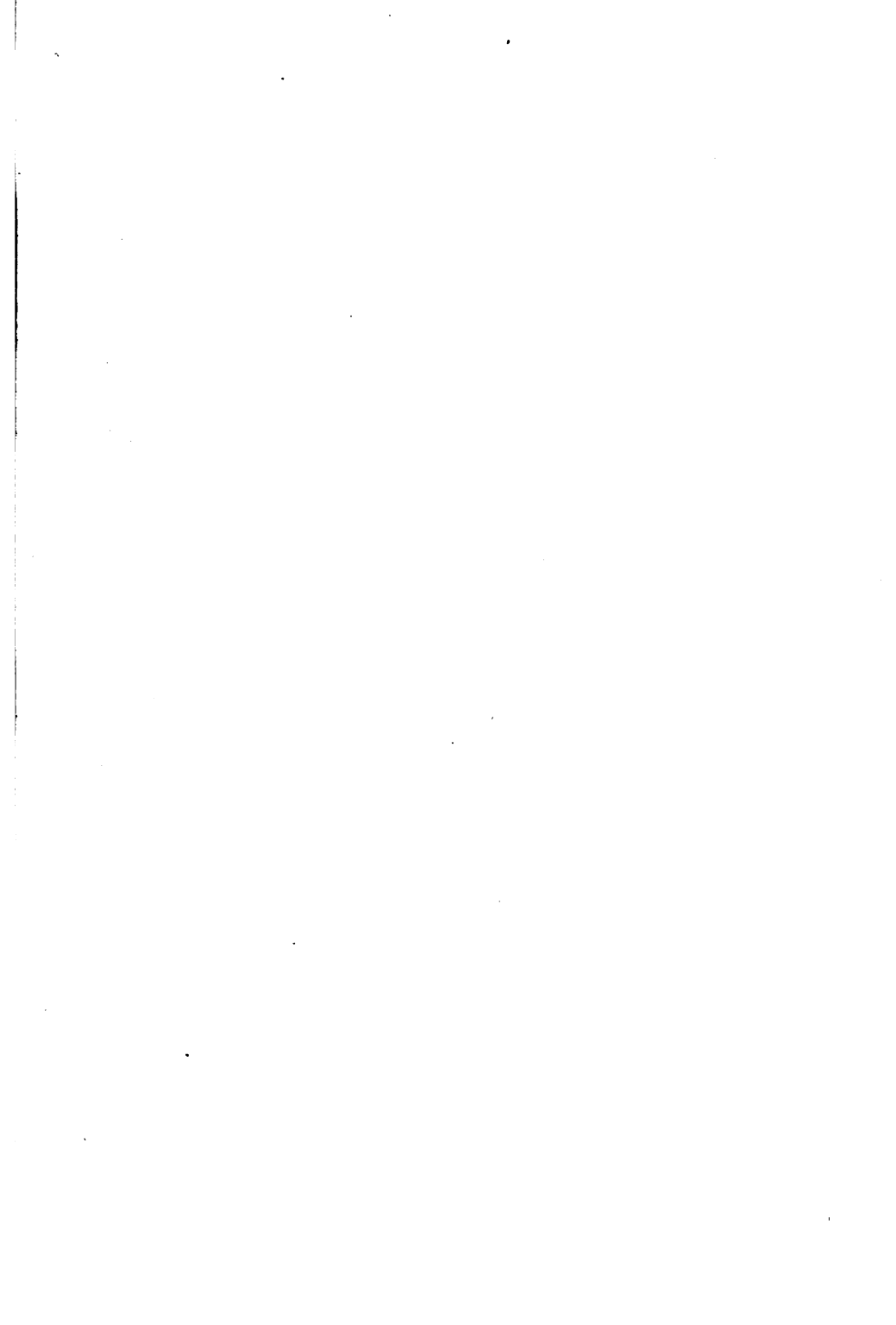
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**HORNY HANDS AND HAMPERED ELBOWS**  
The Worker's Mind in Western Europe

**FULL UP AND FED UP.** The Worker's Mind  
in Crowded Britain

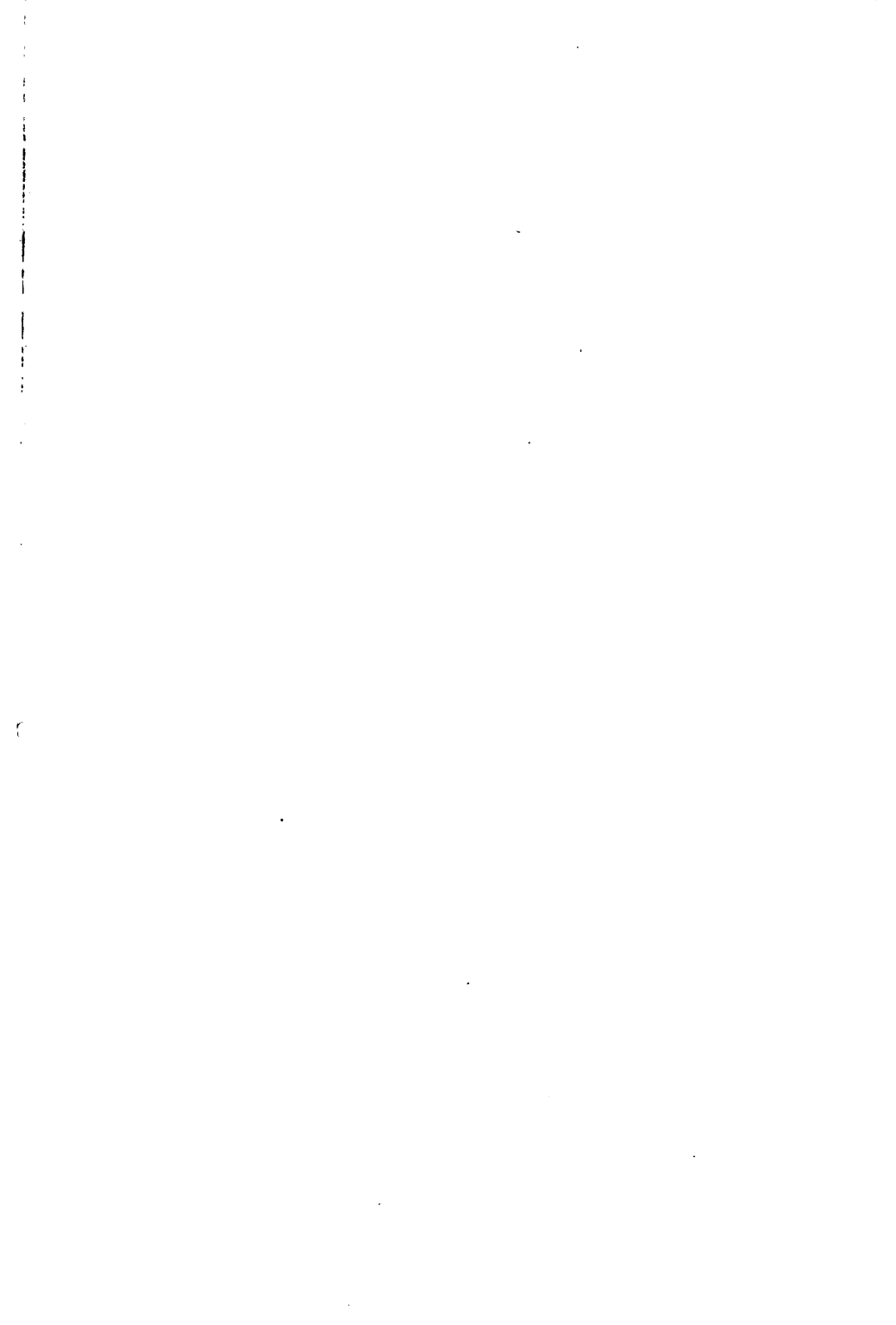
**WHAT'S ON THE WORKER'S MIND.** By One  
Who Put on Overalls to Find Out

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

**HORNY HANDS AND  
HAMPERED ELBOWS**







**"OUTSIDE" WORKERS AT A MINE IN ST. ETIENNE IN SOUTH-CENTRAL FRANCE**

*They typify the spirit of hard work common throughout Europe*

# **HORNY HANDS AND HAMPERED ELBOWS**

**THE WORKER'S MIND IN WESTERN  
EUROPE**

**BY  
WHITING WILLIAMS**

**WITH ILLUSTRATIONS**

**NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
1922**

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✓



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## INTRODUCTION

MY "overalls" studies of the American common laborer in 1919, as described in "What's On the Worker's Mind," resulted in a profound conviction, first, of the vital importance to the worker of the possession of the job—of the getting and the gripping of the chance to work—and, further, of the vast importance to the worker's character and life of the job's physical, mental, and spiritual conditions.

The experiences of 1920 in Great Britain, as recounted in "Full Up and Fed Up," resulted in the belief that an understanding of these "Big Four Factors," and their part in shaping the careers of a nation's unskilled laborers, furnished a useful key for understanding not only that nation's industrial life, but also its social and political development as well.

That should not be strange. For without doubt it is true for all of us at all times that:—

We tend to live our way into our thinking infinitely more than we tend to think our way into our living.

If that is true, then it is bound to carry all the physical, mental, and spiritual conditions of our modern work into the very centre of our modern living and feeling to an extent far beyond anything we have heretofore been

willing to admit. For in this industrial age it is undeniably true for the great majority of us that:—

The most compelling and the most inescapable forces for determining the conditions of our living—and hence of our thinking and feeling—are the conditions under which we work to earn our daily bread—the conditions of our job.

Epictetus described a huge factor for explaining nations as well as individuals—also spiritual, as well as moral or manual achievement, when he wrote:

“What do you think Hercules would have been if there had not been such a lion, and hydra, and stag, and boar, and certain unjust and bestial men whom Hercules used to drive away and clear out? . . . Why, then, he would not have been Hercules!”

The summer of '21, herewith reported, represents partly the desire to observe any unusual by-products appearing in the social field as the result of differences in the working conditions of the French and German populations. Partly, also, it represents the bold hope that the worker's mind as affected by these conditions might furnish us some helpful hint regarding the near future of western Europe, and hence of the world, by revealing the mental and emotional forces now at work in its formation.

It should be remembered that in this approach my primary purpose is neither to prove any thesis nor to propose any particular remedy. So far as possible the aim is to make a camera of myself for recording as faithfully as feasible the feelings, attitudes, and view-points encountered, together with the individual setting of which they were a part.

It will be noticed that the effort has been to get close to the life and work—and so to the mind—of the unskilled, common laborer in the basic industries of iron, steel, and coal. One reason for this is that the field of the skilled artisan is in every country too varied and diverse to cover in one, or even several lifetimes. The chief reason is that the conditions of a nation's unskilled labor represent the lowest common denominator for building up the rest of the nation's entire industrial and social equation.

Nothing is more certain than that the foundations of our modern House of Industry and Life rest finally upon the brawn and the brain and the heart of our unskilled, common laborer.

If in these critical days we are to know whether these foundations of our industry and life in America or Europe are stable or unstable, we must somehow contrive to get a better understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the great mass of our humblest workers.

By our thesis the only way to secure such knowledge is to know the worker on his job.

The reader must judge the extent to which the experiences herewith related support my previous deductions, justify my underlying purposes, or fulfil my resultant hopes. In any case I appeal, on behalf of the men and women who will speak from out these pages, for the same sympathetic hearing which it has been my earnest effort—and my deep joy—to afford them when we were face to face.



*PART I*  
**WITH THE WORKERS**





## CHAPTER I

### THE PICTURE-PUZZLE OF EUROPE

Paris, France,  
July 20, 1921.

IN the mornings it's not so bad. But by afternoon the summer's enterprise begins to look all but impossible. Then I get to feeling like a lad before a heaped-up mess of the red, white, and blue pieces of a jig-saw puzzle—faced by the necessity of somehow making a picture out of it before the whistle blows for my return.

But perhaps the blues of this particular afternoon come from getting into the heart of this jig-saw "mess of Europe" too suddenly. For my morning has been spent at a meeting of "the Sub-Committee on the Limitation of Armaments of the League of Nations"! The honorable gentlemen of the committee appear to be in much the same picture-puzzle predicament. Still they did not seem particularly depressed at what certainly looked like a slow start at the solution of their colossal problem. A certain strangeness and stiffness of manner at the beginning, evidently the result of different language and manners, soon wore off and the gentlemen began lowering their voices from the grand-stand pitch of the first hour. A little later the representative of the French working men was smoking the cigarettes of the Italian general, or the Chilean or British statesman.

And to-morrow will furnish the satisfaction of starting the search for a job in the steel plants and mines up

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north. Yesterday, luckily, permitted a reconnoitring visit to what ought to be called the artisans' rather than the laborers' quarter over by the Vincennes Gate. At a crowded restaurant it was easy to see that the workers were highly skilled men. Some of them wear glasses which make them look almost like the studio artists of the Latin Quarter—especially when combined with their long studio-coats of light-colored denim. In fact, the small furniture factories or machine-shops which fill the neighborhood are called "ateliers," our word, exclusively, for studios. The restaurant itself, like most of them in the district, was on a broad and handsome boulevard. A few of the streets encountered are pretty bad as compared with the greater part of this amazingly cleanly and comfortable city. But even at that they are far and away better than miles and miles of such streets as are furnished by London, or, say, Chicago. Also they are enormously better than the streets and the homes found just beyond the fortifications and the city gates in St. Ouen and St. Denis. These quarters of the poorer and least skilled workers are filled with great factories, gas plants, chemical establishments and slaughter-houses—also with the worst smells encountered outside the chemical laboratory at college.

In this district it is easy to see that drinking is much worse—just about as much worse, in fact, as is the sanitation of the streets or the plumbing of the houses. The summer's first drunken man (outside the celebration of July 14) turned up at the restaurant. Except for him, the drinking of the lunch-time beer and wine appeared wholly without result. Outside the gates, many, many

faces showed that too much alcohol was a fairly regular affair. After so close—so typically close—a tie-up of working, living, and thirsting conditions as the quarter furnishes, it is not surprising to read the many notices still left upon the bulletin-boards. These called upon the workers to rise up and put an end to the foolish and footless war and make the start at once into the era of international peace and brotherhood which was promised to follow the moment the “working classes” in all nations decided to take matters into their own hands.

It would be attractive to stay and dig deeper into the bad jobs which are pretty likely to furnish the cause of the unhappiness which expresses itself in these ways of “rum and revolution”—also to discover whether these jobs might not be so mastered by the French temperament as to make even coke-plant and slaughter-house laborers happy! Remembering how every worker wants to believe in the importance of his job and so of himself, exactly that is more nearly conceivable than we are apt to think. But such working conditions are likely to remain for some time very different from the clean, comfortable, and well-lighted though crowded, little machine-shop I visited earlier in the day inside the walls.

This was run by a young captain who spent two years during the war in America inspecting French war-supplies. His twenty-five workers make various sorts and sizes of wooden tanks, some of them giving their entire days to making small useful and artistic wooden bottles. They do not look rushed but manage to get in about fifty hours—at two to three francs—a week and still have “la semaine Anglaise,” that is, the Saturday half-holiday,

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said to be spreading among the city's offices and artistic establishments.

The captain thinks the high percentage of the population on French farms or in small French cities and towns is mainly responsible for the remarkable "equilibrium" of the ordinary industrial conditions and relations here. Just lately the increase of industrial unemployment has been, he thinks, a benefit to the country because it has helped to send back to the farms the overplus of workers called into the cities by the war. Similarly, their original departure for the city caused a needed increase of farm wages. As for unions, the captain reports his own and also his workers' indifference to the matter of their membership.

In that connection the clerk here at the little hotel used a typically neat French phrase for our very violent but expressive verb, "to fire."

"It is that there are too few to answer," she explained when I finally gave up the effort with the "apparatus," as the telephone is called. "You see, to save money—for our government owns the phones and it has no money—they have *given many employees their 'thanks.'*"

This morning the newspaper gives an extended comment by a former deputy on the heavy loss accompanying the telephone service—or lack of it. The system was taken over as far back as 1889 when it was making a lot of money for its private owners, and so looked like a proper subject for government operation—and profit. This past year it has managed to lose the astonishing sum of 220,000,000 francs! In addition, the equipment is in such bad repair that the prospect is good for both

higher rates and still smaller circulation. The chances are certainly far from favorable to any early spending of the 1,500,000,000 francs required for the system's renovation.

"In America," concludes the article, "there is one phone for each 8 inhabitants; in Denmark one for each 17; in Sweden, each 27; in Switzerland, each 42; in Germany, 59; Great Britain and Ireland, 64; Belgium, 133. In France we have one phone—such as it is—for each 143 citizens!"

In spite of these "thanks," there are considerably fewer unemployed workers here than the reported million and more in Great Britain and the two or three millions in America.

"France would be the most prosperous country in the world if she could somehow get a signed statement that America and England would help her in case of unwarranted attack by Germany," according to a local American correspondent. "As it is, her sleep is one long nightmare from the fear of Germany's attacking her again for the final 'third strike and out'—the ultimate death-stroke—before the rest of the world can come to her protection."

Industrial conditions here are undoubtedly much more affected by all these international matters than ours would be at home. The morning head-lines are usually so filled with them that you get the feeling that France, at least, just can't get completely down to work until her national fears are somehow lessened. Nevertheless, it is surprising to find so little talk about national sorrows and so much about national resuscitation and salvation.

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This last is said to be the cause of the failure of the great general strike on the railways and elsewhere here a year ago last May. Many of the workers were interested to see what the radicals could do but not willing to pay any very great price for the show. So its main result was the break-up of the "*Confédération Générale du Travail*"—the "C. G. T.," as it is called ordinarily, like our "A. F. of L." Its conservative members—they are Socialists—are fighting the radicals or Communists for control—without hope of peace or even quarter from either side. As a result, the labor movement here is what might be called "shot to pieces"—in spite of the dignity lent it by the organization of the country's editors, journalists, and authors in what is called "The Intellectual Workers' Union," ordinarily dubbed "The Brain Trust."

On the job or off, it looks as though the "working class," as it is called by everybody, and the employers and ordinary people who make up the "bourgeoisie" are considerably farther apart here than at home. Here in Paris, at least, it appears, also, that both groups give the rest of their time, after France's security against attack, to matters more or less æsthetic and artistic. The strange thing is that somehow the French—and presumably the Latin—temperament appears to find it entirely easy to include in the realm of the artistic the matter of sex.

I don't see how that piece can be fitted into the rest of the puzzle. Is this strange emphasis the result of any development of France's history, for instance? Could it be, for example, one result of the "generation of defeat," of the men who grew up with the bitterness of 1870 in their souls, and who hated anybody that accepted

the world as it was and tried, therefore, to make the best of it and still to find room for some sort of achievement in the field of philosophies and ideals, sentiments and emotions?

If so, will the commerce and industry of the new post-war France—aided by the present “generation of the victory”—serve to modify these interests? Or is it less her history and more her years—her *age*—that furnishes the matrix in which these national characteristics have developed? In that case, will our American attitudes toward marriage and sex, and government and industry grow more like the French when we have become a settled people after a few more hundreds of years?

What a puzzle! . . . But I must get some of the pieces into my hands for a closer look! Early to-morrow I’ll be passing through Amiens in search of a steel plant or a coal-mine and a job. Up there in the midst of such thrilling names as Lens, Arras, Cambrai, Douai, Peronne, it will be odd to see no marching soldiers. But it will also be thrilling to see men spitting on their hands—if they do that here—and sweating over their shovels and picks in the effort to bring back their world again.

After all, these people over here must find the whole picture a good deal of a puzzle to themselves!

I’ll feel better, anyway, if they do.

Douai, North France,  
Thursday, July 21, 1921.

Distance is certainly a matter not so much of miles as of mind—more of feelings than of geography. To-day has been “the day of the great removal.”



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Oddly enough that "one telephone per 143 inhabitants," is very much to blame for this sensation of loneliness; for part of the feeling, I suspect, is furnished by my feet. The little town in which a possible employer lived furnished no midday train, and only one or two telephones! So there was nothing for it but to walk about twelve kilometres, or seven miles, through the open country. But before that——

It was at Albert, five miles northeast of Amiens, that we first ran into the battle-lines. Both Albert and Arras, five miles farther north, were fearfully shot up, with few buildings of former times left. In the country between them the battered trenches look unspeakably sinister, and the few trees left are nothing but telegraph-poles. But in both these towns signs of the "reconstitution" of things are extremely evident: the staccato of the riveting hammers make a joyful sound in the land, or at least in the stations. An amazing amount has been accomplished. Best of all, many of the former battle-fields are now ripe and yellow with great stands of grain, besides red and blue with harvesting machines said to have been made in America. These make a happy combination with the green and yellow of the landscape and the red of the newly tiled roofs of reviving farmhouses, not to mention the white kerchiefs of the men and women helping to stack the golden sheaves. At the edges of many fields, however, are huge and depressing masses of wicked and rusty barbed wire and, in others, almost acres of sheet-iron stretched over low walls still kindly enough to offer a little shelter to some ambitious person.

At Douai the damage is not so much from bombard-

ment as at Arras, a few minutes farther south. The reason is that this city—it had 30,000 before the war—was taken over by the Germans as early as October, 1914, and successfully held up to the moment of the Great Retreat in October, 1918. Before they left, the invaders burned up a large part of the town bordering on the public square. But, for the most part, the city appears to be getting back to normal with fair rapidity.

At a near-by mine town a friend was expected to honor a letter of introduction by helping to a job. In the absence of trains and telephones, I started off to "hoof it," in high hopes of a lift from some passing driver of horse or auto. Perhaps I didn't use the right words or signs, or was too uncouth in my worker clothes. Anyway, not one of the autos even hesitated—in spite of the fact that almost all of them were of American make. Such refusals—plus a pair of weary legs—are calculated to make a fellow feel a long, long way from Leicester Square and Euclid Avenue!

Still it was worth while to have time to get acquainted with a fellow worker and to enjoy the sight of literally dozens of busy coal-mines, each topped by its little roof for the protection of the great "sheaves" or "pulley-wheels" of the tippie. The invaders used the mines little and did them great damage before leaving, but they are reported in immensely better shape than those at Lens, about a dozen miles west and north. The big dumps indicate that a lot of fuel has been taken out in times past, and the neat condition of the houses, many of them new, indicates abundant hope of finding plenty more of the good fuel in the future. It gives a fellow a start,

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though, to see an occasional house in which people are living in apparent comfort in spite of a great round shell-hole six feet wide in both walls!

The walking gave plenty of time to read the district's war adventures, written in many languages. "Nach Douhi," with its great white German arrow, was close to "Lorries this way," and "Stragglers' collecting station"—evidences of the later pursuit. At every corner the great signs and large names were very evidently planned for men either in the dark or in a great hurry. In many places the usual roadside trees had been destroyed—with new ones often already in evidence. The few cattle have all been brought in lately, for the country's captors overlooked no such detail. One man, limping along and leading a tiny donkey hugely overtopped by a great load of bedding and furniture, suggested the dreadful days of the invasion. The load proved to be mattresses and chairs, all brand-new. It is the sign of the new times here.

The estaminet or bar-room for the noon lunch in a coal village was, strangely enough, filled with Italian miners. One boy was unhappy about his seventeen francs a day and the short distance it went toward his board and room of nine francs. All the miners of the country are reported very unhappy and more or less extreme: in the letter of introduction and protection which I carry from their chief in Paris, he addresses his associates as "Comrades," a term supposed to indicate friendliness to Bolshevism. But the decent homes and the clean faces of most of the miners encountered show prosperity and contentment. Hundreds of workers seem to live in the comfortable-

looking villages, and use bicycles on the good cinder paths for getting to their work. Many of them, too, had evidently come "outside" for enjoying the usual long noon lunch period of nearly two hours with their families at home.

But of all this I hope to know more later, for there surely must be a job for me in what is said to be the heart of industrial France, and certainly looks it. No wonder the invaders broke through here and held onto it! The strange part is that it is only three hours by fast train from Paris. It *feels* like several days. Supper here—the long walk was fruitless!—has been eaten over a clean white oil-cloth alongside several workers who mix many Italian words into a language which isn't French or anything else I've ever met before. They are employed in certain clothing factories here. That looks friendly to my hope to find work to-morrow in the big steel plant where I mean to try to see the director in the morning.

Here's hoping to draw as satisfactory a bed as the dinner.

Douai,  
Friday, July 22, 1921.

Well, it took all my letters and a lot of very bad French. But that's a small price to pay for a chance to start work to-morrow morning at six in an attractive, modern, 2,000-man steel plant. For some reason the manager found surprisingly little trouble in understanding my idea, perhaps because one of my introductions shown him stated so well my interest in the study of "the mentality of the working class," as the French writer of the letter put it.

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Without these letters from a well-known engineer and manufacturer in Paris, by the way, a job would be an utter impossibility here. Outside one of the mines of the neighborhood, for instance, a notice states that any applicant must have his card of dismissal from the army, his card of identity from his home town, and several other similar certificates. So my passport would be a give-away except for the co-operation of the "higher-ups."

The letter of introduction thus required also presents fewer complications than the plan suggested by a French adviser last winter in America.

"That will arrange itself," he answered when I asked what to say in case my presence in a French town needed explanation. "First you can plan an arrival-stay in, say, a port city where there will be many Americans already. After that you will go to an interior city. When they ask you why you are there, you can merely say: '*J'ai une amie.*' (I have a lady friend.) Then they will understand and they will smile and all will be well."

When it came to putting me on the job, the superintendent told my boss that I had been recommended to them as an American who was anxious to better his condition, and so had worked his way across in order to learn more about steel-making and steel-working in France during the period of unemployment at home. Oddly enough, also by great good luck, in view of my newness to "factory French," this boss is an Englishman! Apparently he's a sign of the general "mix-up" caused by the war as observed in yesterday's walk. "M'sieu' Toam" (Tom), as the others call him, is a bright-looking,

light-mustached Cockney who has spent years in the factories and the cattle-ranches of "the States," Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, China, and various other points east, west, and south. After helping drive out the Germans from the town here, he married a French girl and appears to feel happy and settled for life. He says this is the best job run into yet, and that's saying a lot.

On his advice, my overalls have been secured in the market stalls of the main square—at thirty-one francs. It is to be hoped that they may some day show as good a record of manifold launderings and multitudinous mendings as do most of the working clothes of this plant, and, indeed, of the whole region. The big factory is being rebuilt with money paid by the government in view of the complete destruction of the old plant, as accomplished by the invaders who overworked a lot of acetylene torches on its steel columns and stanchions during the last few days before their retreat. As yet the new buildings are only partly filled with machinery, but it's already a very noisy and active place, filled with what look like workers well above ordinary laborers in point of skill and training.

One of these is to be my landlord. What sort of place his establishment is remains a question, but it is evidently the kind of boarding-house which goes with the job, and that's the important thing. At any rate, its name sounds good—"*Estaminet Tout Va Bien*" (All goes well).

"Not bad, physically," said one storekeeper this afternoon when asked how the town was treated by "*les*

*boches*," as everybody calls their recent captors, "Morally, very bad. Nothing but a great prison, the whole city—with thousands of our men who didn't get off to the army in time put to work under armed guards in the trenches or the mines near by."

The situation should become plainer as the French department of my ears improves. It needed little skill, however, to learn from the verger in the old church that it had been stripped of every piece of metal—bells, chandeliers, railings, lamps, candlesticks—everything! The great organ appeared shockingly bereaved and forlorn with nothing but gaping spaces where the great pipes had been. A huge hole in the roof has just been repaired. It was made by an English bombing plane—in the attempt to "put out the eyes" of the Germans believed to be using the high tower as a point of observation. Throughout the city's lawns, squares, and parks, statues have been despoiled of every inch of metal even down to the lettering.

The foreigners were in complete control from about October 2, 1914, up to the middle of October, 1918. Local picture postals show many imposing reviews of the troops with their goose-steps and similar doings—including a grand celebration during a visit from the Kaiser himself. From all accounts, a good many women are suffering now from the cold shoulders caused by their wearing too many fine clothes and getting their food too easily during those difficult days. The strange thing, on the whole, is that, apparently, a large number were able to save both their lives and their self-respect at the hands of the soldiers and officers billeted all over the place. Condi-

tions must have been different from those of the early days in Belgium. Just before the final evacuation, however, about a month before Armistice Day—all the citizens were ordered out, and the town pillaged disgracefully. Finally, a fire was set which destroyed most of the buildings around the main square. Most of the machinery had been ruined or taken from the local factories and mines long before. No wonder the British Tommies looked good to the town's daughters and mothers when they marched into the smoke and got to work with their water buckets!

Also no wonder the invaders found it a town worth holding up to the last possible moment. The railway station is, or was, a huge affair. The time-table's map shows why: lines go southwest to Arras, Amiens, and Paris; northwest to Lens, Bethune, Hazebrouck, Calais, and Dunkirk, the third largest port of France; north to Lille, the capital of the industrial north, and on to Belgium; east to Valenciennes, Mons, and Germany, etc., etc. A great force of workers is relaying the rails while masons and others are repairing the station's walls and platforms. The numerous great engines of American make have been bought by the government since the war, and undoubtedly help greatly to make up for the wide-spread shortage of rolling-stock and motive power. The deep-voiced whistles of these dignified iron giants from abroad compare so favorably with the shrill ear-splittings of the smaller native variety of engines that they are said to be in great demand. Report has it that our doughboys used to get sore at the "Frenchies," when their own whistles were surreptitiously transplanted so



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that some little French engine could use a large part of its steam in manifesting its newly acquired dignity—making the American engineer want to hide for shame every time his own big fellow let out a pitifully tiny toot.

The first impression at the station is that the district is hard on the job of putting things to rights again, with plenty of traffic and much freight moving, mainly coal and building materials. After that comes the feeling that it requires a great assortment of ordinary workers and of officials in caps of various degrees of importance to keep the freight and passengers going. The state-operated railway from Havre to Paris is said to cost fully a fourth more than the others. "We haven't got the key with us," one of its brakemen answered when asked to open the wash-room on our way down the day of our arrival. At Rouen an official came and with the help of a mechanic succeeded in getting it open. In this district the government is said to have come into such close relations with all the railways of the country that the railway-man's job is now practically on the basis of civil service.

Illogically enough, the third impression of the district as a place to live comes in the form of a wish for water, drinkable water, if possible, but in any event, water—more water! The lack of drinking water doesn't bother any of the local population: any outsider doubtless becomes accustomed to this in due time. But the lack of the water of ordinary sanitation is more serious. The houses, hotels, and estaminets appear to be built around a glass-covered court in which stairs lead up to the other floors directly past a toilet practically without water

and furnishing for the washing of hands and face a tiny receptacle holding only a quart or two of the evidently precious  $H_2O$ .

Here at the very modest tavern last night, the stairs and also the sheets were quite clean, in fact I envied them their evident "pull" with somebody for connecting up with a larger supply of soap and water than I have yet seen in these parts. Perhaps the reason is that the "elbow-grease" of the one-eyed and very hard-working maid is less expensive or troublesome than ordinary water. The tiny room, with its only window in the roof and its dirty floor, required a good deal of faith, but so far as could be determined this morning, justified it. At any rate, the dinner last night showed that somebody around the place knows how to cook.

Must move out in a few minutes. Here's hoping nothing worse awaits me at the next station down the line, the "*Estaminet Tout Va Bien*."

## CHAPTER II

### WITH THE STEELMEN OF DEVASTATED FRANCE

Saturday, July 23.

Thanks be for a job, anyway! Can't imagine anything worse than to have no job and still to have to live at "*Estaminet Tout Va Bien*"!

At the factory the half day's work went very well. "M'sieu' Toam" makes a first-class boss, anxious to help a fellow to like his work. Thanks to his numerous warnings, my hands got a minimum of cuts on the razor-sharp edges left on the steel beams after they have been cut into proper lengths by the great friction saw our gang operates. My job is to use a chisel and a hammer for cutting away these sharp edges so that the long beams can be neatly joined together at the sawed edges when they are later riveted into the structural work for supporting the roofs of buildings now going up in other parts of the factory yard. If chisel or hand slips, a nasty cut is the sure result. When the saw does its work, a stream of water keeps it cool but does not prevent a great shower of sparks and a fearful bombardment of deafening noise. Altogether the chiselling, the lifting, and the assault of noise, make it a real job, even though Tom doesn't try to overwork either himself or my French "buddy," and myself under him. As I get it from his extremely obscure French and his sufficiently difficult Cockney, the plant when completed will employ 10,000 men, and so be one of the biggest establishments in France.

All the workers appear to keep going very well in spite of a good deal of eating and smoking. About two hours after the start, everybody takes a good look 'round for any high officials and then, with the coast clear, goes to his locker for an assortment of bread and cheese or pickles, washed down with beer or wine. Cigarettes follow—and more or less continue throughout the rest of the day. Most of those I can see run machines which require fairly accurate work. Many of these last, by the way, including the great saw, give me a friendly look—bearing as they do the name-plates of various makers in America.

Altogether the place gives the impression of a brand-new and well-managed establishment in which it will be a pleasure to spend a week or two. The last hour of the Saturday half day spent in cleaning up the machine and putting our working location in good shape—with the company supplying strong but agreeable soap for dirty hands—is a positive delight.

If only the same could be said for the "All Goes Well"! It's hard to know where to begin! These certainly are the worst living conditions I've ever seen—unless the "fo'c'stle" of the cattle boat of college days be excepted. Perhaps it's because I'm so close up to it at this moment. At any rate, it all seems like an outrageous combination of multitudinous noisy and hungry flies, dirty beds, stinking garbage, squalling babies, promiscuous and untrained puppies and cats, amazingly contiguous filthy toilets, littered kitchen tables, slatternly, half-dressed women, tasteless food, etc., etc.—ad nauseum!

I've certainly found the common laborer—tracked him to his habitat—there's no doubt about that. And that's

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what I'm here for. But it's stretching it somewhat to say that finding him brings any great comfort and happiness.

Supper last night couldn't have come closer to my hopes, in one way, yet it certainly furnished a trial for any white-collared nerves. The first at table was a big fellow with his heavy corduroys held up by a wide red belt. His heavy mustache would do credit to any Bolshevik that breathes. Presumably his hair is also red, but it's hard to be certain as to that, for he never takes his hat off at table! He works over at the station—"on the rails." Next came a little laborer, his small-featured face unshaven for several days. His short, faded army trousers went down to his old gray-blue puttees. With his long hair hanging over his right eye, he looks and talks in a furtive and guttural fashion that somehow suggests a quick and active—and subterranean—rat. Next him sits a hod-carrier—yes, a handsome hod-carrier. He wears great wooden sabots. His mustache and clean shave indicate fair contentment with life. He laughs often. When he does, he strikes his leg with either hand that may be free of fork or knife; whereupon a great cloud of dust arises—so full of lime that we all cough. The tall musketeer of a fellow on my right, with magnificent red mustaches, is a mason from Dunkirk, where work is scarce. Immediately on my left is a thick-set, black-haired, heavy-mustached laborer with one eye—as good a make-up for the heavy villain's part as one could wish to find in a month's search. In between—the greasy, bread-strewn, beer-dripping, fly-covered table and the bad smells.



MR. WILLIAMS AS HE IS, AND IN HIS "PROTECTIVE COLORATIONS"  
Centre, as a laborer—after the hardest of day's work (page 75) in a coal-mine near Lens, North France; right, as an  
artisan in the steel plant (page 21)



The way the crowd can fill up their plates out of the huge bowl of boiled potatoes, for instance, is marvellous to see. Such appetites as those unshaven faces and huge mustaches appear to represent! The meat is too precious to be put up to our self-control; it is served by the landlord's wife as she passes back and forth from the kitchen. At the proper time, when you have finished with your soup and have filled your soup-plate with potatoes, she appears with the precious meat and her fork. At least we can agree that she plays no favorites. Suzanne, the little daughter of nine, appears to be the drudge. She keeps jumping up continually to fetch the bread or butter from the passageway or to serve the ubiquitous beer. But she gets nothing but the most terrifying of scoldings and shakings for it all from a father who gives the rest of his time to ordering the hard-worked, young and once-pretty wife about or to entertaining his thirteen-months-old baby—except when he is trying to feed it such things as hard-boiled eggs! When he passes from this to yelling at Suzanne and banging the table while she whimpers, the mother shouts and a glass, or two, breaks—well, I'll confess the whole combination makes me think about the Statue of Liberty and the sky-line of New York Harbor.

All this was, of course, calculated to prepare the new guest for the worst in the way of a room. The result was hardly disappointing, though plenty of air came from two windows in the roof. The bed's wires are so antique that it made a dreadful racket every time I turned—as I did often at the start, with the thought of the probabilities in store. Finally, I made up my mind that my sensa-



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tions of various moving things were the work of imagination, and so resolved to turn once more and then go to sleep without further testings—except just once more. Alas and alack!—my fingers encountered on my shoulder something that made, under pressure, a long, soft, smeary squash! Having learned the worst, and hoping for the best, I went to sleep, thanking whichever of my stars had made me a first-class hoper.

This morning it was a matter of arranging a few very bloody murders, and then trying to dress carefully in the new overalls. So it was a hard blow when Tom greeted me with a kindly word and then flicked something from my lapel with his:

"You got bugs there at the '*Tout Va Bien*,' ain't you? Blime, that's nothin'—they're all over the bloody place 'ereabouts," he was considerate enough to add.

Still I'm for suggesting to the editors of the next book on etiquette something like: "It is considered polite to mention the weather or other similarly innocuous topic when brushing indecent insects from the lapel of a friend."

Well, I can stand it for a week, and, for the matter of that, still other weeks if necessary. Tom, however, hands out another jolt when he opines that in his experience the workers here live better and are much cleaner, more self-respecting, than the miners and others of the older St. Etienne region. That's hard luck.

According to the paper, many people besides myself are unhappy. The day's doings for the city, appearing in the regional paper published up at Lille, give quite a list:

"One Boitelle, otherwise judged prudent and faultless,

has stolen a bicycle. Condemned to prison for six months."

"At a near by station in Pont-de-la Deule, two miners stole a case which they thought contained vermouth, but which was only shoe-blackening. Given six months and forty days respectively."

"Louis Jacquemart, without money or work, presented himself at the estaminet of M. Donnay. Saying that he was a new employee at the Mayor's office, he ordered a copious meal. When it came time to pay he turned his pockets inside out—nothing but a piece of tobacco and two pants buttons! For his joke he was imprisoned three days."

Nearly every day there is an item or two about the miners, the carpenters, or the textile workers up at Roubaix-Turcoing, beyond Lille, and their conferences with the managers or "patrons" about the question of reductions in wages or in the cost of living—"dearness of the life," it's called here. Verily, two difficult subjects the world over!

Having duly washed my well-cut hands with the company's soap, with the aid of dirt as instructed by Tom, changed my clothes and eaten a second dinner with my new comrades, it would seem helpful to keeping the steady keel undoubtedly demanded for the week just ahead if one were to make a petite promenade.

Sunday evening.

If only there were some way to reproduce all the sounds that come to me here in my attic from the courts and windows of this crowded corner where the working

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population is taking its Sunday afternoon loaf, and, in the highest temperature France has known in years, taking it *hot!*

Except when the babies cry or the dogs get excited, the cornetist and the "accordionist," just opposite, are the prize winners, especially when they are accompanied by the drummer. Occasionally, however, a fearful automatic piano in an estaminet filled with foreign laborers, puts even them in the shade. The band at the garrison, luckily or unluckily, is a little too far away to interfere with them. Most of the conversation—especially the joking—is carried on in high voice, as though meant to be shared with everybody in the quarter. Unfortunately, the same holds for the frequent and furious scoldings usually addressed to the children. The strange thing is that no one seems to have a talking-machine. The singing, however, is continuous—so much so as to suggest a self-starter in the way of alcohol—and almost every place near by has the bar of an estaminet down-stairs. Evidently most others do as does mine host—work by day and then, by night, help the wife serve meals or drinks. A man's ears tell him that the population is pretty tightly packed together, but, for the day, at least, not particularly unhappy about it and extremely relaxed and leisurely.

A large part of the town was on hand to see a very agreeable gymnastic exhibition staged in a near-by square with the help of a band early in the afternoon. It seems that every French city has these groups of athletic boys and girls—with their wands, parallel bars, etc. With the help of a few contributions from leading citizens,

they exhibit their training in other towns much as our baseball and football teams.

This morning offered quite an impressive ceremony in connection with the interment of the unknown allied soldier. Without music, the straggling line would hardly have been very impressive with its handful of soldiers, more widows and still more orphans, a flag-covered wagon and a general and a bishop or two. But with the help of the slow beats and heavy chords of a funeral march, the irregular steps of the various motley groups were somehow tied together into something calculated to give every onlooker some very serious thoughts about the high cost of warring—especially when, as we stood with bowed heads, the coffin passed by the gaping fronts of homes bombed during the operations, or, later, came into the ruined town square.

While the procession was forming there was an extraordinary amount of hat-tipping, hand-shaking, and cheek-kissing by the various dignitaries—military, religious, civil, and commercial. An onlooker couldn't help wondering what the general or the bishop, for instance, would do if, by some strange chance, his position were for the future to be cut off from the kowtowing now inseparable from it. A big increase in the pay-envelope or other emoluments would pretty surely have to follow in order to make up for the discrepancy. Not that these men are especially different from the rest of us. Life is pretty much made up of bowers and bowees—with practically every one of us performing, at all times, in not one but both rôles. Thus everybody here bows to the bishop. Fine! Who wouldn't be a bishop! But when

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he goes to Paris or Rome he bows to the archbishops and the cardinals—reflecting, meanwhile, how nice it would be to be bowed to by other bishops! So Tom at the plant likes the way the French boy and I kowtow to him as the boss of our great, screaming saw. Meanwhile, he bows to the *Contre-maitre*, or department “super,” and nurses his hopes some day to be bowed to by those who are bosses of saws! We all certainly do like the bows that go with this or that position. It wouldn’t be so far wrong to hazard that they get more action out of us bowees than does the money paid us. It is these bows that sing to us in the streets and the public places the pæan of our personal achievement to date. The same song is sung to us by our white collars or even our canes. It’s not a bad song, either, for it helps us to what is one of the most difficult things in the world—to believe in ourselves. More harm is probably done, on the whole, by underbelief in ourselves than by overbelief. They are comparatively small in number who need preachments against pride. Of these few we are afraid because if they do not care for the opinion of the rest of us, how can we prevent their doing what is harmful to us? This fear it is that makes us forget that the vast majority of us spend entirely too much time screwing up our courage to the point of taking ourselves seriously, and hugging to our soul’s hungry heart the gratifying assurance of every bow we can manage or contrive to get hold of!

The slenderness of the dividing line between the satisfactions of matters physical and tangible, such as food or money, and of matters mental or spiritual, such as

bows, impresses me more than ever now that every night I get into that creaking cot of mine. After a few moments the definite testimony of my sense of feeling as to things crawling about upon shoulder or knee becomes entirely untrustworthy. The reason is that my mind gets into the matter too thoroughly—so thoroughly that I can't tell at all whether the real movement is on my body or at the other end of the line, in my brain. Finally I give up, turn over, and fall asleep from sheer disgust at such an unreliable information service as my nerves appear to furnish. In the same way, after a mosquito or two has sung its song into my ear, my ear's soul, as it were—its mental or spiritual double—gets into the game of mosquito-listening so completely—or so acutely—that its testimony as to mosquito song and mosquito silence becomes so hair-splitting as to be entirely worthless. The resultant lack of faith in one's own senses produces, for some reason, a most depressing feeling of both bodily helplessness and spiritual insignificance: the ordinary tools for connecting with the outside, tangible world have shown themselves no good, and in all the width of the universe, tangible or intangible, there are no others!

Perhaps it is this wish—this universal wish—to get away from the thoroughly demoralizing uncertainty which thus goes with all narrow margins, that makes us all tend to go too far the moment we can put our physical or spiritual feet down upon the *terra firma* of definite, wide-margined certainties and assurances. So we build a house much bigger than we need—or eat more or drink more than is at all necessary—just to get the enjoyable

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relief that comes with the sense of definite, unquestionable undoubtedness.

There has been time to ponder on all this, unfortunately, in the darkness in between the mosquitoes and other things. For the nights have brought something new—a narrow sheet and a narrow blanket. Every time I get under them I have to spend some time trying to “rationalize” myself, as the psycho-analysts would say, to tell myself the cover is enough to cover me—just, that more than enough is too much and that a narrow sheet should not bother a college graduate, even though people for years have squandered money on wide, and unnecessary, edges. But later when the cold wakes me up to find the covers on the floor, I realize that a famous Philadelphia merchant has learned more about sheets and such things than I.

“The part of a sheet or blanket that keeps you warm,” according to this expert, *“is the part that hangs over!”*

Perhaps my thirty-inch sheet is scientifically enough—if there is such a thing as “scientifically enough,” in such matters. But one thing is sure: it isn’t enough *to make me feel sure that it is enough.*

Just that difference of margin—of the part that hangs over—appears to me more and more at the bottom of the difference between, say, the unskilled laborers and us white-collared chaps. Statistics can perhaps demonstrate mathematically that everybody has an economic sheet wide enough to cover him. True enough, perhaps, on the average and under normal circumstances. The trouble is that nobody lives “on the average,” least of all the people who have the narrowest sheet. Sometimes

we figure that we could live the life that goes with the job of the "narrow-sheeters," and manage to get along a lot better than they appear to. The trouble is that we are unconsciously figuring on carrying with us into that job—and the life which is pretty inexorably determined by it—our own education and foresight. But it is exactly the lack of these that makes him a common laborer; that lack is, automatically, a part of his whole situation. That being so, he, of course, does fail to avoid illness as well as we would in his situation, and to protect himself against the accidents of both factory and fate as well as we would. But if he could do as well as we—well, then he wouldn't have the common laborer's job that requires the living of a common laborer's life. The important thing is for us to see that it is footless for us to figure how properly to deal with either his body or his soul apart from the narrowness of his sheet, for this at every hour of the day or night is compelling, at this point and at that, some little readjustment of both.

In the same way, I have been deciding, throughout the length of some of my cold darkneses, that I could sleep fairly well under this sheet if somehow I could contrive a means of lying still. The trouble is that the narrow sheet is tied in to the very nature of the whole situation which grabs me the moment I accept the necessity of accommodating my life to a total earning power of less than twenty francs a day. That same situation which furnishes the narrow sheet as a part of the landlord's poverty, also furnishes—automatically—the other things—the other little, but lively things—which make it quite *impossible to lie still!*



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Yes, these nights put me in a mood to believe that it's the part that hangs over that counts—it is not wasteful, it is necessary. The existence or lack of it in the field of things spiritual and mental, as well as physical and economic, is driving us every hour and every week of our lives to fit ourselves to our sheet—either to lie carefully or to enjoy the luxury of easy movement. Nevertheless, most of us continue to make the mistake of thinking that the hobo, for instance, is different from us, not because of these margins—these differences of degree that come to cause differences of kind—but because of some difference down at the bottom of his hobo soul.

Here in Douai the sheets must be fairly narrow for a lot of people. Pretty much the whole population appears to be hard workers, with only occasionally a person of the careful or chic appearance of the Paris boulevards, and I recall that the Paris boulevards are found in the working quarters, too. To be sure, this part of the world here in North France has led a mighty hard life for most of the months since October, 1914. But it is easy to believe that for some reason or other the pressure of existence is heavy—much heavier—here than at Paris. This impression is sure to be gained from every crowd. It is supported by the ordinary conversation at the table down-stairs. Naturally, the high cost of living is felt to be the immediate enemy—with the Great War as the cause behind it. Then behind the war and causing it, is seen, by several of my new friends, the arch-villain of the play—the capitalist.

“Capitalism is international, not national,” so runs the conversation often. “It goes wherever it is led by

its lust for profits." (Note the high voice of our mason as he rubs thumb and finger together in the universal token of money.) "That takes it into any and every country of the world. Enemy or friend—that means nothing to 'M'sieu' Money-Bags.' So labor should be similarly international. If capital knows no country, why should '*la classe ouvrière*'? Here's our country, I tell you, here"—tapping his plate of meat and potatoes—"here—wherever we get our jobs."

From such words it is easy to pass to the morning paper's news of the big business man or the politician, who has been arrested for stealing millions of francs in connection with the "reconstitution" projects at Lens or elsewhere in the near-by devastated regions. Whereupon the one-eyed day-laborer agrees with the mason as he shakes his head in his personal belief that Jouhaux, the head of the French Federation of Labor, has been bought by the government and that he never was a real laborer anyhow. According to the mason, all present confusion in the ranks of labor—one item shows a big miners' conference voting 113 for and 113 against standing with the Moscow Bolsheviks!—has thus been brought about by the politicians.

"A big trouble, too, my friends," says the red-mustached railway laborer, "it is that there is too much difference between us manual laborers and skilled workers. Picture yourself! Some skilled workers who sweat less than we do draw as much as four and five francs the hour! I ask you, is it not so? Yes, and meanwhile, we do well to get from a franc and a half to two francs, or maybe two and a quarter. More than double! For why? . . .

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But then, it's that way in the army, too. Why, I know a man—he had no 'protection' (pull), you know? Well, for twenty years—yes, it's quite true—he has never moved from being a sergeant, while others of his friends pass him continually! I tell you, ten minutes of 'protection' is worth more than ten years of service anywhere—in the army or on the job."

"But it was the French soldier boys at Verdun," adds the mason; "it was they who knew what to do when they ran into too much authority. You know, one day when a crowd of them had a day or two off, they wanted to go into the town which thousands of their friends had died to save. And some gendarmes told them they couldn't enter. Ha! It is to laugh! What did they do? Ha! Nothing except hang them to a few lamp-posts that happened to be overlooked by the bombardment!

"One night," he goes on; "we had to get into the tombs for protection—the dead dead and the living dead, or half-dead living, we were all mixed up together! Oh, my God, how it was terrible! Unspeakable! . . . And at Fort Douamont we were entombed for four whole days and nights. When they finally found us, the hairs of several of my friends were white!"

It looks as though this pressure of the "H. C. L.," aided by war-weariness and war-disgust—this vast weary-disgust—were causing a touchiness with regard to *everything*—except the Washington Conference for limiting armament and the League of Nations. Though the men appear to have no huge amount of interest in either of these, nevertheless, they feel that anything at all which

gives a slight fraction of a chance for avoiding war is worth trying. Perhaps that is where President Wilson made a mistake. He found this part of the world deathly weary—deathly sick—of war—especially France, where the forty years of fear of war were finally justified, horribly justified. Then he forgot that the passionate intensity of this sickness here has had nothing at all comparable to it amongst us in America, sick enough of war though we have been. It's this intensity, too, apparently, that makes the "Internationalists" feel as they do about all this nest of neighbors pushed up against them in this crowded continent.

"What good did we get out of fighting the Saxons, for instance?" demands the mason. "Prussians, yes, they were terrible—and are—but Saxons, they were better, is it not so? Always our prisoners would say to us, 'Me Saxon—not Prussian! Prussians bad people, yes!'" It was to laugh to see them with their hands up! Yet for a while the big statesmen had to work hard to decide whether Italy was our friend. Finally, they decided Italy was not our enemy. If they hadn't so decided, then we should have had to shoot the Italians! Shoot or no shoot?—like that." (Business of turning hand palm upward then downward.) "And in any case we should have had to obey—or be shot ourselves. Ugh! It is all terrible. It must not happen again! No—never in life!"

One thing is sure—a lot of these things look amazingly plainer when you sit and eat under these dreadful surroundings, with the table a smear of beer, bread, and flies, with the cat eating its meat on the desk at the same

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level with and touching the table, and the wriggling puppy or the dirty baby in the landlord's half-sleeved arms, and when you talk with these men who were prisoner-slaves here during the occupation or were at Verdun, or who devoutly thank "the good God that He gave me an awful wound that took me back into the hospital and then to another sector."

Yes, it's a pretty war-worn world—also, evidently, a peace-puzzled and perplexed one.

## CHAPTER III

### "FRENCH NIGHTS IN A BARROOM"

Monday, July 25.

WELL, to-day brings one discovery, at least. That statement that the Frenchman never drinks to excess is not true; at any rate, not for the French working man and his week-end. Between Saturday noon and Monday night life here looks like just one little drink after another. The beer is very light, but after all— Well, here's how it's gone:

Saturday afternoon mine host asked me to go with him for a business call or two. Every few squares we stepped into some little bar for a "Bock," "un shoppe," or "du vin blanc, s'il vous platt." Luckily I was allowed to order smaller and smaller glasses. Otherwise I might have been staggering, too, when his business was finally done.

Sunday evening many estaminets were a-roar with singing, and many drunken men were on the streets. My mason friend was well seas-over and anxious to show pictures with full details regarding all his children—they number seven! This morning at coffee he was a wreck. With sickening aches in head and stomach, he was anxious to figure just how it happened.

Monday is apparently taken as a sort of tapering-off day. First—as usual—came the morning cognac in our glasses or bowls of coffee drunk in the filthy kitchen where

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the boss starts the fire and the flies make a tremendous hum as they begin the day's operations on the kitchen table's unwashed plates, the uncovered garbage pail, the dog's unfinished bones, or in the toilet on the other side of the half-height partition. Next a short walk to the factory. Within a few minutes after starting work, a wink from a friend gets me over among the machinists. Behold another bar! With plenteous precautions, a wreck of a man stops his machine while he pours us out—at fifty centimes each—our glasses of gin. With appropriate thanks I return to my hammer, chisel, and razor edges of steel—to note a bit of dizziness a few minutes later. In spite of extra care taken in realization of the danger, it is nevertheless to be noted that more cuts happened in the next half-hour than in all the rest of the day. One of the other men treated by our friend fell within the succeeding half-hour, and had to go to the plant nurse with a badly skinned leg. During the morning many of the workers drank beer and wine out of their bottles brought in pockets or knapsacks.

“Don't you like my brand?” my French buddy asked, almost insulted when I accepted only a few mouthfuls of his proffered beer.

At noon our bibulous friend had my landlord and myself in to a bar opposite the factory gate for a couple of glasses of port wine. Later, at “home,” of course, beer was served freely, as at every meal. After that—as usual at the noon dinner which is permitted by the hour and a half's recess, aided by the bicycles—we were served red wine. Then a glass of hot coffee. After that the usual small glass of cognac or whiskey had to be refused. On

the way to the plant the same old chum asked us to step in to the bar again! Luckily, we were too close to the whistle, and a minute of tardiness costs a half-hour's pay. During the afternoon another invitation to the secret gin bottles had to be refused. At four, when we got our sandwiches, Tom advised me to be sure to get a bottle and bring my beer hereafter. "The water's unsafe 'ereabouts," and he told the details to prove how it had been fatal to a fellow worker. Every time the nearby machinists see me drinking water they put hand to stomach and make awful faces, as though expecting my immediate collapse. When the whistle blew at 5.30, we had another stop-in for beer. At supper-time—7.30—our friend stopped in for still another drink with our host, and unfortunately showed himself pretty muddled though still extremely friendly. At supper, of course, we had nothing to drink but beer.

"A joke! A dream!" one of the laborers snorted when told that in America it was believed that Frenchmen seldom got drunk, now that absinthe had been prohibited.

As a result of all this, unfortunately, the "Tout Va Bien's" keeper also showed himself very well loaded at supper. His shoutings and scoldings and shakings for poor little Suzanne still ring in my ears—worse than before, and that's saying a lot, a dreadful lot. With feet sore, fingers cut, hands greasy in spite of the strongest of soap, back tired and ears half numbed by nine hours of the screams of our saw—such a combination makes it most pleasant to dream of going home and speaking pleasantly to my daughter and the others of my family the



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rest of my days. It would be good to know whether his scoldings and yellings are the result of the flies and the rest of this situation, or just the day's drinkings, or perhaps a "protective behavior" intended to "save his face" when he feels below par. Anyway, it makes, by all means, the hardest thing to stand in the whole outfit here at the house—much harder than the dirt and the bugs.

Which reminds me—alas!—that there's just time for a stroll before getting under the thirty inches of sheet again. . . . At any rate, here's hoping that the little laborer in the next room doesn't talk in his sleep as much as he did last night.

Wednesday.

Am feeling to-day like a victim of the high cost of living—a bit revolutionary. Find that my pay as a laborer is only a mite more than 13 francs a day—for a working week of five days and a half. Meanwhile, board and keep cost 12 francs a day—for an eating and sleeping week of *seven* days. Other workers of much the same sort in the plant get an additional "benefice," or h. c. l. bonus, of 5 francs a day, and some of the day-laborers on the railway, for instance, get a total of over 20 francs. Some also get small additions for dependent children as the result of a union of employers in the effort to increase the birth-rate. But even at that, board and room at 10 or 12 francs—say, 75 francs the week—make a pretty heavy pull on, say, 120 francs of pay. Back in the American steel towns the bed and board were not over ten dollars—or well under half a laborer's income. No won-

der the mason who is seven times father finds the going mighty hard, especially when Dunkirk offers no work, and the contractors give no family "supplement" for the children.

Apparently, the boarding-house keepers are not making a fortune, either. The drought has put vegetables of all kinds up to extremely high levels. Meat appears always high, and, so far as our table is concerned at least, both precious and tough. The cheese and pickles for my factory lunch appear expensive, even for one who can buy francs at eight cents apiece. Red and white wine are also high—too high to be anything like as common as pre-war. A good pair of half-soles comes high at 16 francs—three-quarters of a day's work! A new pair of good shoes requires serious thought at 60 francs—as also a suit of made-to-order clothes at 300 to 400 francs.

All this makes one wonder all the more at the surprising neatness of person and the general intelligence of face of the better class of mechanics comprising most of the workers over at the "*usine*" or plant. On Monday every pair of overalls in the place appeared freshly washed—evidently that represents an important part of the wife's duties. Altogether, the assorted and assembled patches of various vintages showed more shades of blue than Joseph's coat. Even on the hot afternoons, too, the strict etiquette of neatness apparently forbade the loosening of the double-breasted, semi-military jackets. The heat made me risk shocking them by working in my khaki shirt, coatless. Most of the better-trained hands are getting about 30 francs a day. The 54-hour schedule breaks the national 8-hour law and will be stopped when

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things here in the devastated regions become normal again. Everybody possible is on piece-work, but a rule forbids their making a sum more than 60 per cent above a certain guaranteed minimum. So when they approach that 60 per cent—and they use up a lot of chalk figuring it all out—they begin to slow down. At all times the crowd keeps a sharp lookout for the higher officials. To-day we were well ahead of our schedule at five, and so started to use up a good half-hour getting ready to "take off," on the instant of the whistle. Suddenly word came down the line by a combined series of low whistles, winks, and nods that the director was approaching. In an instant, Tom, in spite of his street clothes, grabbed his hammer and began pounding a steel beam vigorously to register great activity. I wonder if the bosses are as easily fooled by mere activity as we workers get to thinking.

On the whole, the machinists and apprentices near us get a lot of work done and, judging by their use of precision tools, work of a high order, too. That doesn't keep some of them from playing an occasional tune with their hammers while others thrum at a long file held "à la banjo." To-day the excessive heat caused a lot of horse-play. Two apprentices were approached stealthily from behind—when no boss was near—and full buckets of cold water left upside down upon their heads and shoulders!

"If one did not work for a day he went to prison for a day. A loaf of bread we had—once a week. Often—yes, many times, we saw our friends die of starvation, dropping at their work." So the young Frenchman with

us, in between times, tells us of his days when, as prisoner, he labored in the coal-mines.

The jolly little humpbacked machinist—an artist with his file-banjo—was a street-car motorman. Both are sure that much of the food sent in for them by the Americans was taken by their captors. Local postals, by the way, show a German bakery operated by the soldiers here in the plant almost exactly where we work.

It is easy to hear hot arguments between citizens who had different ideas about proper relations with the conquerors. Some that knuckled under too easily are finding life unpleasant now—men as well as women. Last night my one-eyed table companion had it hot and heavy with a dapper-looking young gentleman who had feathered his prison-nest by becoming an overquick and overwilling interpreter for the invaders.

"It is necessary to say that our friend, this one-eyed man, is a brave fellow," the landlord explained when asked the why of the fuss. "You see, when the boches came, they made everybody work. Our friend said: 'No, I do not wish to work, thanks.' They put three bayonets against his throat—ugh, like that. 'No,' he said, 'no, I will not work.' Then they counted—eins, zwei, drei—by ten he must decide, you understand? They counted ten. He looked them in the face and said: 'No, I will not work for you boches.' And they did not fire. No one knows for why not. And he did not work. Always sick, or pretending he was. Yes, it is to be said that he is brave."

Me, I take off my hat to him—besides asking forgiveness for saying, a few days ago, that he looks like a prize

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villain. Incidentally, he works seventy hours of hard road labor every week at 2.25 francs per. On most things, furthermore, his view-point is remarkably balanced and sane.

Perhaps somewhat the same war-time differences of opinion, made intense by the fearful strains of the war, are at the bottom of the fierce conflict in the General Labor Federation's annual conference up at Lille. Yesterday belts, chairs, and even bullets passed between the majority Socialists and the minority Communists, luckily without fatalities.

Another "hang over" of much the same sort is, doubtless, the large number of divorces now reported in France. The bibulous friend of Monday, for instance, has just divorced his wife for her overfriendliness with an Australian soldier. It is easy to imagine that she had had—perhaps for a year—no idea whether her husband was alive or dead, at the moment the English marched into the town, just after it had been pillaged. History's Great War has also been, evidently, history's great "Mix-up": an enormous number of children of the present French generation are going to represent an amazing mixture of bloods. So far I've seen no Chinese laborers here, but of Algerians, Senegalese, negroes, Italians, Spaniards, Poles, etc., etc., there are many still at work here as during the war, and in many cases they have become illicit husbands. The French appear to hold slight prejudice against them and to make slight distinction amongst them. Last evening I was introduced to an old fellow as an American:

"You know, these foreigners aren't so bad," he ex-



THE LANDLORD OF THE "TOUT VA BIEN" AT DOUAI WAS KINDER TO HIS TWO PETS THAN  
TO HIS WIFE OR LITTLE SUZANNE

The "little laborer" is at the left: the one-eyed laborer who defied the invaders is at the right



pressed himself to our mutual friend. "Why, not long ago I met a Pole—yes, from Poland, and he was quite a fine fellow. Yes, it's true, so, I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. American."

Still, each month is helping the world "back to normalcy," more than we are apt to think. To-day, for instance, the papers feature the notice that only four days remain in which a citizen can present his claims for war damages. That means that thousands and thousands have put in their claims, received the proper amount and spent it for furniture, etc. That's said to be one cause for the great number of bicycles here in town. Though they were fairly scarce before the war, it somehow happened, so the boys say at the plant, with a wink, that nearly everybody happened to have one on hand when an English bomb fell or when the final pillage took place. With the payment of war damages, a great many people, of course, came into more money than they had ever seen before. In order to stop the wasteful expenditure which often followed, it was shortly required of a person to show receipts indicating his outlay in the proper directions of house-rebuilding or refurnishing before the full sum was turned over.

The same "reconstitution" is represented by the laying of the corner-stone of the new library at Louvain. Burned by the invaders August 25, 1914, the new building has been made possible by American givers. Last week, also, American givers were represented at the restoration of the cathedral at Rheims. (Around the table here, by the way, they say that after the invaders came into the Rheims country, they pillaged all the large champagne



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cellar-depositories, and as a result got so drunk that the only trouble the French soldiers had was to get them to move themselves back to the prison-camps!)

There are a good many one-armed and one-legged men about, but not so many as might be expected. All industry appears to be co-operating in finding them work. There has been no time to visit the local school for the "mutilés": fifty-four hours of work eat quite a hole in a week.

The surprising freedom with which crowds of young girls from thirteen years up were dancing with the boys at the band concert in the square last Sunday night is also said to be largely the result of the war. It comes partly from the new ideas of feminine liberty brought by the American and other soldiers. Partly also from the unconscious effort to forget the dreadful war in every possible way. It looks certain that things will never get back here—or anywhere else in the world—to the *old* "normalcy." "There ain't no such animal"—it has died and been buried. But things are surely getting back to, at least, a *new* normalcy. If anybody could guess just what that will be, he could come close to guessing the near future of the nations.

Now to "wrap the drapery of my couch about me," except that it isn't wide enough to wrap nor clean enough to suggest pleasant dreams.

Thursday, the 29th.

Well, I've just come close to "spilling the beans." And glad of it, too, now that it's over.

The day's ten hours of fearful heat, plus the usual ham-

mering, brought me "home" a few hours ago pretty well done up. That is probably the reason the whole outfit down-stairs in the kitchen seemed a few degrees sloppier and nastier than ever. I certainly wanted to saw and quarter the mass of buzzing flies that have to be forced out of the way when you start up the stairs past the open garbage can, the baby's soiled things, and the dog's platter. Luckily, there is never any question about the propriety of any one's stripping to the waist for a cool bath at the kitchen pump in the presence of the landlady and the assortment of other women who come in to help along, and stay for supper. Such remarks and indecencies of allusion as are passed out by the men, and enjoyed, apparently, by the women I would never have believed possible in any civilized society.

When we finally sat down to supper the whole thing seemed worse than ever. With the window of our dining or bar room opening into the kitchen, we all had to chase flies with one hand while we served ourselves with the other.

In the midst of it all, the landlord—doubtless he was "done in," too—broke out into the worst abuse yet of poor little Suzanne. It has been a poor day for anybody's brakes—including my own. I suddenly "came to" by finding myself shouting out to him in bad French to stop it.

The silence that fell on the table! Their spoons poised in astonishment, the mother and all the boarders stopped gurgling their soup and looked at me and then at him. Of course he got his breath quickly and roared back at me:

"Here in France, sir, I'd have you know, we believe

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that children must *obey*! That's the only lesson they need know at her age. Later, perhaps, something else, but *obedience now*. You're in France now and in my home, and I'll handle her the way I please without any advice from you."

I could only say that it was none of my affair, of course, but that I had a daughter of thirteen whom I'd give my arm to see and would not talk to in that way. For some reason, perhaps the fatigue and the lonesomeness, it proved hard to keep back the tears. Luckily the mason helped by saying that he got obedience in his large family without speaking so brusquely. To save his face, the landlord, when he had sat down and things had quieted, told us with considerable fervor how:

"The French girl of fourteen, I assure you of it, is better raised, more polite and polished, better educated, and in every way more developed and more intelligent, than the American girl of twenty."

From that he went into praising the French soldier in much the same terms of comparison with all others. That luckily gave the one-eyed laborer, bless him, the chance to say—with proper tact—that with all officers of all armies there must be, of course, no question of obedience. "But the important question, m'sieu', is how best to get it—by harshness or by good treatment."

That, in turn, gave me the chance to relate Tom's accounts of various times when officers known for their vicious methods had fallen in battle with bullets from behind!

And so the crisis passed—without my landing on the street.

One of its greatest tortures was the inability to use plain English. It's awful to have to find an outlet for so much emotional pressure in so "petite" a channel as my French permits. It would have been worth a small farm to answer his claim about the French girls, for instance, with what a boarding-house of the same class in America would have permitted—and required:

"Aw, for the love o' Mike, where d'ya get that stuff, huh?"

Just now I feel like a wreck, and can think of little but steamers, harbors, Pullman cars, and the like. I wonder, too, what little red-faced Suzanne thinks of her father. After all, he only represents much the same kind of discipline that our religious teachers tried to drive into us for a number of centuries. Worst of all, they thought when they did it that they were following the spirit of the founder of Christianity! That same idea of fear—the fear of losing the job—is still utilized as the only basis of obedience and discipline in most of the world's factories. It looks like a mighty expensive plan because, like little Suzanne, the men don't figure that their good-will is asked for. Over at the shop to-day, for instance. . . . But there's not the gizzard left in me for going into that just now. It takes all there is to get over on to the springs that commence to groan with the travail of my spirit as I commence to feel myself the object of diverse—diverse and unwanted—attentions.

"30 Juillet."

Some day I must compose a poem or somethin' entitled "Some Towels I Have Met." Only it might not be al-

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lowed the freedom of the mails! Anyway, here's a pledge to shake hands with the next clean one encountered! Of course, I could import my own. But with everybody performing his toilet—or hers—here by the kitchen pump, a private towel would make altogether too much difference in caste.

In the same way I could, presumably, buy plenty of attractive French pastries between meals. But holding up my end requires that my plate be emptied of at least half the huge amount which these laborers eat. Any spoiling of appetite after the day's hard work would make that impossible. As it is, I can almost get pleasure out of my "good form" in putting the skins of my smoked herring, for instance, onto the table and then, when finished, scraping them all off skilfully into my well-emptied plate.

What is most to the point, it looks as though we have gotten each other's confidence for discussing plenty of things together. To-day, for instance, the ever-hatted, long-mustached railway worker gave, unconsciously, a capital testimony on the psychological string which ties such a bedlam as is our kitchen to booze.

"This young fellow will be sick before long," he opined to a lady visitor about my comparative temperance. "He doesn't drink enough. If a person drinks plenty of alcohol he protects himself against cholera and all sorts of disease. Me, when I miss my cognac and go out onto the street, then all the nasty smells along the way begin to make me sick. They give me quickly a headache—you know how it is, yes? But let our landlord put plenty of it in my coffee, or maybe give me a good glass

of Genievre (gin)—then I can walk past those same smells and never notice them at all."

Quite so. And rather desirable, this greasing of his senses, not only here in our kitchen but also out on the streets with their sanitary lacks due to the public's peculiar thought and habits about certain things. This same situation, due to carelessness, of course, has probably served to make the city's drinking water fairly dangerous. The result is to make beer and wine the national thirst quenchers—children must drink the beer as well as grown-ups, for water is almost never drunk by this group. Similarly, gin and cognac and other things become the national health protectives.

Tom, by the way, confirms last summer's impression in England. He believes that the "rum ration" in the British army is responsible for teaching many boys to drink: he says he refused his up till almost the last. The Frenchmen here tell of huge doses of almost pure alcohol given them before "going over the top."

One of the franknesses following on the established confidence and good-will gave me a moment's scare.

"You can't be a regular American, m'sieu'," a chap said to me last night. For an instant it looked as though he were going to start trouble. "You see, as a boy I read much about life there with you. And according to them all, every American has more than you of a *red skin*."

He was referring to "Faineemoor Coo-pair" (Fenimore Cooper)!

A little later the mason was almost offended because of my difficulty in understanding him when he spoke of "coo-ee boo-ees," as seen in the movies of American

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life. The habitat of these cowboys is variously located in the minds of my friends here as somewhere west of New York City and a little south of Buenos Aires!

Here in this district the residents saw nothing of our dough-boys. They seem to think the English Tommies extremely hard-drinking and drunken. Both the district and the Paris papers are amazingly meagre, not only with regard to America but about the world in general, including France itself. None of these—including the *Matin* and the *Journal*—has more than four pages all together, with possibly six on Sunday. Of each of these four, you can take off a page and a half for the total of very modest ads. So far as news is concerned you can subtract at least a column and a half for the daily novel. That leaves a total of, say, fifteen or sixteen columns for all the doings of Douai, the Republic of France, and the rest of the world.

"You see the Frenchman wants only to see in five lines what the actual event was. Then he looks the next day to see what some well-known deputy or statesman believes the event to mean."

That is the explanation by a journalist who has lived many years in both America and Paris. The trouble is that even the five lines are very scarce. That is particularly true when nearly half a page is given, day after day, to the exploits of the bandits who recently held up the Marseilles express "after the manner of the best American movies."

"They can't get the French business man to take the risk of advertising. So the editors have to save on news service," says an American editor.

"Most of them find their bread buttered best when they make themselves simply the mouthpiece of the government. They are paid fairly well for this. So why bother about news? They live not by the news but by propaganda." So a French observer explains it.

Me, I don't know the cause. But I am sure that it makes a most outstanding and serious lack—one calculated to interfere with France's wish to be considered fit to play a much larger part in the future of the world than in the last generation or two. Naturally enough, to my worker friends the biggest international event of recent months is the Dempsey-Carpentier fight. They accept their popular champion's defeat with good grace.

"*Trop fort*," they say with a gesture registering bigness of wrist and arm and neck. "Too strong."

In spite of finishing the week's work to-day, I mentioned to the landlord that I had noticed some *estaminets* near by which were charging only nine francs a day. His reply was that such places served only imported—that is, frozen—meat while he made a point of serving fresh, and, therefore, local "*viande*." Strange that this prejudice against South and North American meat should exist here as well as in England in spite of its costing less and being generally better. As the other places are even dirtier than the "*Tout Va Bien*," I'm perfectly glad to have paid the twelve francs here.

Douai,  
Monday A. M.,  
August 1.

Was positively sorry Saturday morning to say good-bye to my good chums, Tom and my French boy who



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gets married next month. I hope Tom makes good. His pride in his saw is sure to get him somewhere—possibly into trouble! Friday a particularly hard beam forced the saw to call for so much “juice” that a fuse was blown out in the main power-station. So the whole plant came to a stop. Tom got an immense amount of delight out of the mishap. “I did it on purpose,” he whispered to us, like a tickled schoolboy. Of course he didn’t. Still his sense of importance was wondrous to behold. Yesterday he spent practically all afternoon transforming a box into a tool-chest, and was as happy as any girl with a new doll house. I wonder if the psycho-analysts would find a connection between that and the fact that the bane of his childhood days in England was a mother who drank and who made him fear her four-foot cane:

“Blime, I used ter think she cud use that bleedin’ cane like a fair lassoo—that expert she was with it, as ye might sye.”

It was a pleasure to compliment the superintendent on the excellent working conditions in his plant. It is to be hoped they will continue so after, for instance, the brand-new roof windows get dirty. Much of the splendid spirit of self-respecting workmanship doubtless comes from the general feeling that the big bosses are honest and trying to earn their salaries: that’s one interpretation made by the men of their frequent appearance in the plant itself. It’s a pleasant place to be. When a fellow is busy it’s a joy to listen to the hammers of the machinists or to the ascending gamut of the cranes or “rolling bridges,” as they’re called here, as their revolutions ascend the scale from “start” to “full”—also to

watch while our finished steel beams, careening gracefully in their chains, are carried down the bay to the big machines where the drillers make all the holes we've chalked for them. When the place is finished I hope the infirmary will have cleaner quarters and a cleaner, smarter man nurse.

Yesterday afternoon on a final Sunday stroll with the landlord, it was again a series of friendly bars and various "good comrades." The last of these was one who had not got on well. The man's home was a tiny farmlet with a collection of pigs, rabbits, chickens, and pigeons, all under his one roof. His father-in-law was a drunken wreck who earned a little money with his hand-cart and a huge hound.

"Five hundred kilos—a demi ton, that is—he can pull, and for twenty kilometres," the old man explained with pride as he kissed the dog's great muzzle.

"A revolution we'll have—and soon," he shouted to us a little later in between his drunken songs.

"But no," his eighteen-year-old grandson called out to him. "The dearness of living, it is everywhere. Yes, to be sure. But it comes from the war. It grows worse, but it will pass finally."

"It is the last death-pangs of Capitalism," so says today the chief Communist journal regarding the unemployment now spreading throughout France and the rest of the world. Up at the big conference at Lille, the Conservatives in the "C. G. T.," had a majority of only about 250 votes out of 3,000 over the radicals.

"France's 500,000 or 600,000 soldiers—yes, perhaps 800,000—a huge sum these cost us all, for their beer and

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bread and bed!" protests the mason. "Yes, and that's not all. Think for yourself how much these could earn for France if they could work! Perhaps one milliard (billion) of francs! And not one of us that wants to fight a living soul—surely not one of us who have seen this war. When I was a boy—yes, then it was different. You know how it was, my friends? You perhaps did as I. I used to go to our town library and get down the great books with the soldier pictures; then I'd say, 'Aha, some day I shall be like that—some day I shall be soldier!' Was it not so? Yes. But now! Well, as I have said, I was at Verdun. *And I want no more war.* No, it must not be—never in life again!"

Last week a Paris paper recalled that the first railway in the world was put into operation a hundred years ago—only a hundred years ago. Doubtless, it is these steel rails and steam giants that have helped us to pull such an enormous load as that of the century's developments, and to travel so fast and so far into the territory of so many new and steel-gray problems.

In a few minutes I must let one of the big engines land me in the midst of ruined Lens.

## CHAPTER IV

### HATE AND HOPE AT HEROIC LENS

Lens,  
Tuesday A. M.,  
August 2.

MOST of the twelve miles from Douai was behind the Germans' front lines, and many houses had evidently been bombed or shelled by the English. On all sides masons and builders are busy—also the harvesters of the yellow wheat and oats. Part of the way the railway itself had evidently served as near the front line, judging from the tons and tons of tangled barbed wire heaped up every few rods on both sides.

Lens used to be a city of over 40,000, the leading coal centre of France. But we had to take the word of the conductor when it came time to get out—there was no sign of station shelter other than the merest shed. When the armistice came, one brick upon another there was in Lens, but it was the brick upon another of the deepest ruination only: the whole place was simply a pile of débris traversed by a few straggling paths. The amazing thing is how even in three years and less the laborers could have cleaned it up so well, ready now for starting over again. Amazing, too, to get a very fair lunch in one of the few new brick buildings before taking the train again to a suburb where a letter had to be presented to a mine official.

The tale he told of the cold-blooded murder of the dis-

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trict's mines makes a man want alternately to laugh and cry and swear. It must have taken tons and tons of ammunition to put the mine tips and washeries into the condition of complete ruin evident from the train on all sides—for there are nearly forty shafts in the Lens district proper. Boilers lie prostrate with their torn sheets pointing in every angle and direction, huge steel beams crumpled and folded and twisted, walls levelled. All and everywhere the most complete agglomerated chaos of wreck and ruin the mind can conceive. Worse than that, other stores of high explosive were set off below surface in the mine shafts. The whole district, at a certain level, is practically an underground lake. To put the shafts down they have to freeze the ground while they work in caissons almost as if they were digging through the sea. So the explosion of hundreds of pounds of powder at this level in a few pits placed the whole vast series of intercommunicating mine workings under water.

"One of the new pumps which we have installed lifts to the surface 180,000 cubic metres or tons of water every twenty-four hours. We commenced operating the first pump in November, 1920. We have reduced the water's height by about 175 yards. We shall be putting others in as rapidly as we can get them. Nevertheless, at the best we cannot hope to get the water out again until well toward the end of 1923!"

The company that operated these mines housed its 16,000 miners in 8,000 houses—at a rental of about \$2.00 per month. Their output was over 4,000,000 tons or one-tenth that of all France. Of this national total of 40,000,000 tons, this north country supplied about three-

fourths. About three-fourths of this, in turn, was in the hands of the invaders throughout the war. And still France somehow continued to make steel and carry on her fight! Cut off from more than half her regular supply of coal and much of her steel, she still continued to do business—much as if an invading army were to establish itself within the first two months of its arrival throughout the State of Pennsylvania and much of New England!

I take off my hat to a spirit like that. I take it off again to the spirit that comes back to such a mess of bricks and twisted steel, and calmly tackles the job of getting it going again on something like the old basis: of the company's homes only thirty were standing when the final gun was fired. Everywhere the eye sees the neat new mine pulley-wheels or "sheaves" and housings of the new "tips," great new washeries and coke ovens rising above the tangled wreckage and the dugouts and culvert-like log cabins with inverted U-shaped roofs of galvanized iron. Already nearly 3,000 new houses are up again—following the efforts of nearly 10,000 laborers from just about all over the world.

Up till a few months ago the government has been advancing the huge sums needed for all this reconstruction. Since then it has had to stop—its treasury exhausted—pending better arrangements with a certain debtor. But the company has had the faith of its convictions. (Faith seems to grow around here, and not on trees either, for they were all shot away: perhaps it grew on barbed wire, there are miles and miles of that.) So it has borrowed and now spends, on pumping, cleaning up,

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building, and installing, the huge sum of 800,000 francs a day. They expect again to ship coal all over France, mostly by the system of canals which go from all this country up to the coast at Calais and Dunkirk, up north-east to Lille and its factories, also to Paris and, by a short cut of the Marne and Oise Rivers, down to the great industrial district around Lyon. Besides all the by-products of naphtha, tar, benzol, etc., from their 500 coke furnaces, they expect to generate enough gas to furnish the horsepower needed for the pits, to supply the city and suburbs with free light and sewing-machine service, and, in addition, to send cheap electric power to points as far away as Paris.

At the conversation's end I was told that it was too dangerous for me to go to work with the few hundred miners now getting out a little coal, but that I could go below—the third visitor to date to have such a privilege, and that only because I was an American. Rather than wait for the evening train, I set off afoot for the eight miles back to Lens.

It was evident that the canal itself had once been No Man's Land. The wire entanglements made great dreary piles—much of it with four-pointed barbs to every inch. It made it easy to recall the pictures seen of dead men hanging almost upright, their clothes caught in so many places at once. The little electric cars which ordinarily pull the canal's boats are not in operation, but otherwise the traffic seems normal enough. One family was resting its horses while mother held by a rope the small daughter taking a cooling dip.

"I am mayor of the village here and was during the

war," the keeper of an estaminet assured me when I stopped in to rest a moment. "My wife here was in the hands of the boche while I was with my regiment. I was the first man into the place after the Germans left. It is not possible to describe it. Terrible, I do assure you. . . . Now? . . . But yes, much progress has been made."

He sent a crippled boy along as a guide to the next town. At various points we could see the only buildings which had survived the general destruction that had otherwise put every home into its own cellar. These are the low, flat monoliths of concrete and steel which gave the Germans shelter during the worst bombardments. Along the railroad embankment, other enormous masses of steel and concrete continue to shelter parts of the cannon that were pointed west and southwest at the English lines just a few miles away. Out on the road we walked on the lips of the front-line trenches. Under foot were hundreds of the steel casings of British shrapnel, heaps of grenade handles, the torn steel of the gas bombs, etc., etc.

"Right here, m'sieu'," according to the boy, "the dead soldiers used to lie line upon line, like those sheaves of wheat there. Just like that, m'sieu'. . . . And since long time here, too, very dangerous to farm. Still many 'obus' (shells) down underneath, though one seeks for them always and has them exploded carefully."

In only a few places are the trenches still to be seen. Sprawling and uncertain in direction they are, irregular and much more shallow than I had expected. It appears that the fearful cannonading so ploughs up the place as to force the trench line to follow wherever the shell



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holes and their rims permit. The amazing thing is the vast amount of change that has already been made. Except for a low wave of white chalky subsoil running through the harvested fields, it would be all but impossible to guess that almost every yard of these pleasant, yellow lands had been drenched in blood.

Back in Lens the incoming trains were evidently increasing the population rapidly. Laborers carried their possessions in their knapsacks. Women had chairs, bathtubs and wash-stands piled on top of the baby's feet. Undestroyed hopes, fresh plans, abounding faith, everywhere.

Too tired to test the quality of the new and grandiose two-storied cinema, I made for one of the rude single-story barracks—boarding-houses. It furnishes a mere cell for bed and wash-stand. But clean. *Clean* sheets and clean wash-stand—with no flies, almost, and no scolding of Suzanne. Just before I went to sleep thanking “le bon Dieu” for letting a fellow have a look at such a wondrous combination of the works of hate and of hope as this town gives, I found myself chanting as I got into the clean bed:

“What perfection—what luxury! Blessed are they who are concerned to make clean, for such help also to courage and to charity.”

Lens,  
Tuesday evening.

It is easy to bear up under the company's unwillingness to put me to work—after seeing the men getting out coal under the conditions inflicted upon these mines and miners by “*les boches*.”

A tiny drum serves to lower the small cars to the only dry seam. When the engineer and I got out—about 400 feet down—we found it wet and nasty enough, especially where the pressure of all the water-filled ground beneath was pushing up the floor. To-day the miners are getting out of the pit about 100 tons a day as compared with a former 3,000. In the early days of the war this shaft's pair of high steel towers made the Tommies hereabouts at Loos call it the Tower Bridge mine. Of all that super-structure every single pound was left a wreck.

In some rooms men work their picks or their air-drills at a vein hardly two feet and a half thick. Then they shovel the coal into a steel chute where it moves to a waiting car whenever a half-naked worker pulls a great lever back and forth above his head. Altogether it looks like the genuine thing in the way of hard work, and hardly overpaid at the rate of from twenty-two to twenty-five francs per day of eight hours.

All these conditions, however, are too abnormal to be judged. Even to-day the men were complaining of the air-drills, the engineer assuring them that he understood perfectly but that no others could be obtained as yet. Then he showed me ventilating pipes covered with soldered shrapnel holes. We got still closer to the war's greatest devilry—at least its most coolly calculated devilry—when we reached the galleries from which only the water has been pumped out.

Yesterday I wondered why that could not be used for irrigating or other purposes. To-day told why. Not only is it very sulphurous but, during the occupation, the invaders put the bodies of many horses, and also of

the enemy dead—into the pits—besides making them the cess-pool of the army! So the mine captain went ahead into the unopened portion and tested the air carefully so as to make sure that neither our lamps nor our senses would be put out by the noxious gases. It is hard to think of a more unpleasant job than piling into the cars for the surface all the tons and tons of slimy rock that have fallen from the roof and filled the passageways. Needless to say, it is dangerous work, too, the timbers having long ago been rotted and destroyed. It certainly does take imagination to hold your safety-lamp upon such piles of evil-smelling refuse, and see again the movement of well-filled cars along the roadways or hear the vibrant sound of the shovel as the miner scrapes up the last pound.

In spite of the darkness, certain things became plainer than ever before. One of these is how the sum asked of the Germans came to be calculated. For, of course, the moving of every pound of that rank *débris* has to be paid for by the party that planned and executed this awful murder—definitely and coolly in the attempt to put industrial France forever out of the running. Losing wars is expensive business, especially when the loser takes so much trouble—so much organized trouble—to render damage. I saw, to-day, for instance, a piece of board on which some German officer had kept a record, doubtless with great satisfaction, of the constantly rising water on his different monthly inspections throughout nearly three years, ending finally with a sort of "O. K.," when the water was level with the outside ground!

I can believe that one particular bit of this organized

meanness will not, perhaps, be paid for this side the Judgment Seat. M. Elie Reumaux organized the Lens Mining Company. He was seventy-six years old, or thereabouts when the town was captured, and so was kept a prisoner. Pit No. 13 had been named for him. One day the old gentleman was brought out by his captors for a celebration. Great quantities of explosive had been placed ready in the shaft and throughout the various parts of the splendid tipple and washery. A wire connected them to a button in the grand stand. In the old gentleman's presence and before his eyes, the ceremonies were concluded with the pressing of that button and the blowing of his beloved mine to smithereens!

That explosion suggested itself to-day when I looked down into the huge crater where the British touched off a vast mine under the German lines just outside the nearby village of Loos. The great hole is being preserved as one of the historic spots of the war. From its rim you can see Vimy Ridge and Notre Dame de Lorette, names of determination and death.

I wonder, too, who will ever make up the loss such as I met this afternoon. A mere shaver of a lad who looked like, say, fourteen insisted that he is eighteen. To my "Unbelievable!" he added sadly his, "Yes, that's what everybody says, but it's true all the same." Finally the explanation came. He was here during the war. He lived in one cellar or another, trying somehow to get shelter from the dreadful shells and enough food to keep his sleepless body and hopeless little soul together. Of course his schooling stopped when he was ten. He is now a day-laborer, poor little tike. He works ten hours

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at the place where the brickbats are ground up, and, with cement, made into building blocks. He earns thirteen francs—with board and keep hardly less than eight. Food is said to be nearly twice as high here as at Paris.

"We French believe much in helping the little things to do their work. We always use lots of grease. That protected its working parts," said the engineer of a pump down in one of the galleries this morning. It still pulls the cars of coal up an incline—after nearly three years under water.

So the whole district—including the youngsters who were gleaning the harvested fields this afternoon—seems to have been kept going by the grease of faith or patriotism or love of home or something that has saved its working parts from destruction. Anybody who needs just that kind of grease will do well to buy a ticket to Lens—quickly, before the dreadful days of its protective virtue are nothing but a memory. Certainly it is hard to imagine a city so demoralized in its actuality yet so devoted in its aspiration. No wonder the city was given the Croix de Guerre "as a model of heroism and patriotic faith." Perhaps such nobilities come from such baptisms of fire.

Listen! Something like an orchestra is playing classical music—on the ruins of Lens outside my barrack window—on the undaunted ruins of Lens! What can it mean?

*Later.*—The orchestra proves to be a group of devoted souls practising in a near-by estaminet. The wife of the landlord there says she, with many other Frenchwomen, was here during the war in the hands of the enemy. I take off my hat to her, as well as to Lens, and the pump:



**LITTLE GLEANERS IN THE FIELDS NEAR LENS**

They are typical of the thrifty spirit of France—also of the hopefulness of the new generation now in possession of a wider-margined France



**"CERTAINLY IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A CITY SO DEMORALIZED IN ITS ACTUALITY YET SO DEVOTED IN ITS ASPIRATION AS LENS"**

Everywhere the new and modern factory is rising upon the ruins of the old



"For six days and nights, m'sieu', there was a dreadful bombardment. Brrr-boom-boom—every minute for six days and six nights like that. Dreadful. Still we Frenchwomen liked it. Yes, it is as I say, we liked it. For we said each to the other, 'After this will come the silence, and then the attack. After that they will be here—our husbands, our sons!' Finally it stopped and we waited through several days. But they did not come. No, they did not come. Oh, it was dreadful, m'sieu'! The attack, so far as we knew, failed, though we learned afterward that they gained Loos and got still nearer. But when they did not come, then we all gave up hope. Up till then, yes, we could hope in spite of everything. After that, no. 'We will never see them again,' we said. . . . And yet, here is my husband again with me—he plays the bass viol there. Wonderful, is it not?"



## CHAPTER

### BELOW GROUND WITH THE MINERS—AND ABOVE

A mine town near Lens,  
Wednesday,  
August 3d.

AFTER presenting a letter of introduction and a request for work to the head of the local coal concern, there was time to stroll out into the country before learning my fate. The score or more of high pit towers flanked by their huge pyramids of refuse make a picturesque sight when seen across miles of level yellow fields. After a long loaf at the bottom of one of the numerous great stacks of unthreshed wheat, an English sign on a roadside inn proved attractive. It had been left behind, it seems, by some of the Tommies who held the line only a mile or so away in the direction of La Bassee and Lens. Over their beer a hag of an old woman with a bleary eye and a masculine, bearded face, was telling a hunchbacked but bright-eyed little woman—they looked like creatures out of some dreadful book—how she had seen a German shell land near a British soldier.

"But yes!" she answered when I asked if it had killed him. "But yes! Like this!" And she made a movement of scraping fragments together.

"Turn here during the shelling of Monument" (in the main square) so several English signs still direct traffic in the town. Many buildings show that the shells found their mark. Schools practically suspended because it

was so dangerous to let the children out. Nevertheless, most of the town's mines, employing 10,000 men, seem to have kept turning out the coal so badly needed by the country. Occasionally it was found wisest to operate them only at night.

Later at the office, the company kindly offered a job below, though unable to pay me. It seems that any one working "at the face" has to be in a particular gang or *chantier* which divides up its tonnage earnings among its members. For that reason the men have a right to choose their own associates—after knowing how they work!

So I'm settled now in a miner's boarding-house—to report for work at five to-morrow morning. It looks a shade worse than the "*Tout Va Bien*." Six of us sleep in one room, and in three small double beds! The charge is only nine francs, but from here it looks as though somebody owed an apology to that much-maligned single bed and room there at Douai. This dining-room here is not so bad as last week's, but does give out onto a strong conglomeration of cows, chickens, rabbits, wash-tubs, and manure. The mixture of drizzle with the smoke of the town's coke-ovens makes the whole geography appear a dreary salad. The occasional street hydrants are the most popular social centres—a bad sign, especially when added to by open sewers. Even the new and attractive houses, evidently built by the company, are already filled with an aggregation of chicken-coops, rabbit-hutches, and dove-cotes. It looks like a population sleeping under very narrow sheets.

However, the wife and manageress of the establishment looks good-natured and is rather pretty, and neither

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she nor her fat miner-husband raise their voices when they speak to their two little babies. That covers a multitude of sins—even sanitary sins, which, in a “manner of speaking,” are among the hardest in the world to cover.

I’ll know more after a go at supper. Nobody seems in a hurry for that except myself—it’s already nearly eighty-three. It will be good to lay down even the weight of a pencil after carrying a heavy bag from the distant station.

Well, dirt or no dirt, and good bedfellow or bad, it ought to be interesting to-morrow 1,800 feet down “inside.”

Mine town,  
Thursday night.

If all the miners hereabout work even half as energetically as our gang did to-day, it’s hats off and no mistake! Personally I took it a bit easier in between loads in view of the no-pay arrangement as “a student of French mining methods.” But even at that I did my full share of loading the thirty half-ton cars which we sent up, and which the group evidently thought a full day’s total. My back is willing to agree with them. The others hardly paused a moment. Stripped to the waist, every one of them kept going unceasingly with his back bent over his shovel, his pick, or his car.

“Always like this, yes. Oh, no, never tired. . . . *C’est l’habitude, m’sieu’*. It’s habit—habit and custom does it,” so the gang leader explained. Even our two huge Poles—out of the 1,500 here—kept going splendidly. Both of them are newly arrived and are having trouble with French. So they were delighted to tell their troubles in German:

"Always for six years—yes, seven—up till now, nothing but war in Poland. And no way to earn bread—except come here. And here contract say nineteen francs a day and we get only sixteen," as they showed me their collections of shrapnel-scars on their muscular backs and hairy chests.

At nine o'clock we had a half-hour for putting on our shirts and sitting down together with our lamps to eat the huge cheese or pickle sandwiches out of our sacks—we had to hang them up carefully away from the rats—and drink "coffee-water" out of our glass bottles or tin flasks. We were hardly arrived at our working place before six-fifteen. First we had to get our lamps and wait our turn before getting into the cage where twenty-four of us crowded into the three different half-height stories or divisions. Then klumpety-klump for a third of a mile drop. A walk from the "bottom" through the black passages took us more than a mile and a half. Then, by twelve-fifteen or twelve-twenty—after a second go of nearly three hours—it was time to start back. Somehow or other that walk back to the bottom always proves about as trying as any part of the day—perhaps because it always comes immediately after the strenuous day's work. It is especially hard here because we have to climb up several hundred feet at one of the steep inclines or "*descenderies*" before we can begin our long walk on the level of the hoist's bottom.

Most of the day I kept wishing, not to enjoy a "place in the sun" up outside but, oddly enough, just to have in my hands a good American shovel! Those used here have nothing but one long round handle, with no cross-

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grip at the end. So the beginner has to use much of his grip simply to *hold* rather than to operate his load. So I'm nursing blisters to-night, including the biggest on the side of my thumb. Except for that the short hours of actual work—about five and a half in all—are a pleasure to think of.

As back in America, so also here, it is, unfortunately, the life that goes with these hours that is unpleasant.

Can't tell much about my bedfellow because I've not yet seen him—he came to bed late last night, and was sleeping in the darkness at four-thirty when a fellow miner called me. But whoever he is, he certainly has an active disposition. During the night he kept continually turning, each time sticking knees or elbows into my back. It was almost a relief finally to get up and into working clothes. Down-stairs the wife was grinding coffee and from out of the darkness, thanks to the flames of the freshly lighted stove, showed us her attractive eyes and teeth in a pleasant though somewhat weary smile. I'd like to see the scene painted, for it's the start of the working day here just as the Angelus is the end. Breakfast is evidently a very silent affair—everybody sleepy and everywhere darkness except for the black-golden beams from the stove. As before, nothing but a small cup of coffee with a little cognac in it.

"Yes, I have a wife, but for me and my three sons she is dead—yes, quite dead." So, on the way to the tip, a fellow boarder explained how his mate had been too friendly with the Germans during the near-by invasion, and has since had to spend eighteen months in a hospital.

"And now—it's still a secret, but I can tell you, m'sieu'. I have a sweetheart. Yes, over at Bethune.

. . . Divorce? Yes, maybe—but that costs much money. Perhaps it's not necessary. We shall see."

Have just now met his boy of nineteen, a mason's helper. He tells of his three years as a civil prisoner in a captured town to the northeast. He was often beaten with a great stick for various failures to salute officers or for his overzealous efforts to secure food.

"But, you see, we could often perceive the Germans stealing it when they were distributing the food that came from you Americans. Oh, yes, that's true, I assure you. So we did the same from them when we saw a chance. Often and often our supper and dinner were nothing but a pull at our belts—yes, like this! And many died—when they were too weak to pull their belts. Then it was to dig to bury them! La, la! . . . My mother? . . . Ah, she is dead, too, so far as we care. Imagine it! She liked these beasts! Dreadful, is it not?"

His ambition is to begin his military service next year and then become a corporal or sergeant, and so get "plenty to eat without too much to work," until he is, say, thirty-five. He says the English and American boys gave a little too much attention to the Frenchwomen altogether to please their French husbands on the firing lines. He puts a good deal of pepper into the popular song when he sings:

"Après la guerre finie  
Et les Anglais partis—"

Here's my bedfellow! He's a chum of the boy and was a prisoner, too. His youth explains his nocturnal

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energy, doubtless also his inattention to my elbow jabs against his pushing me into the wall. Luckily all six of us in the room retire at a fairly early hour and are not averse to a certain amount of ventilation. Luckily, too, the sheets are comparatively clean, fairly ample, and, apparently, not otherwise inhabited. Still, it's not very pleasant to think of going down in a few minutes to the supper of bread cut from the loaf by our pocket-knives, with cheese and pickles and beer from off the slimy table while the window opens onto the barnyard, and the baby sits on the floor and eats from the same dish with the cat.

In spite of the weariness from the night's knees and elbows and the day's thirty cars—also the unhappiness of the continued dirt, disorder, and nastiness of it all—still, I'm enthusiastic for M'sieu' Landlord. He is one that takes his hostly responsibilities seriously.

When we reached home tired and grimy, he poured out some evidently precious hot water into the tubs and buckets in the shed just off the kitchen and gave us some soap, wash-rags, and towels. A little later I offered to wash the back of my buddy, figuring that that was the best way to take care of my own—in line with ordinary mine-town procedure where the wife has to promise to "love, honor, and obey," and also to wash her husband's back! To my surprise he waved my offer aside:

"No, it is not necessary. Are you ready? I will show you something!"

With that he whistled. To my amazement in came friend landlord. Without a word—after all his years of mining—he took up soap and wash-rag and proceeded to wash and then to wipe the backs of both of us!

Greater consideration hath no landlord in all the world than that!

Ah, at last! There's the call at the foot of the stairs for supper. "Oui, oui! Tout de suite! I come!"

Friday, the 5th.

This entry ought to start with "Caution!"

The high explosive of "t. 'n. t."—tiredness and temper—is all over the place and the world looks black—after a coal-black day. It started with the blackness of the night filled with horrid wakings caused by some enormous spiritual pressure to scream! Perhaps that came from being crowded into the wall by those active knees. The only possible way out appeared to be to take my pillow and camp out on the floor. But no bedclothes could be taken without base injustice to my soundly sleeping bedfellow. It required the greatest conceivable effort at self-control to abandon one plan after another and finally—with a last push and jab at my companion—to turn over and fall asleep—only to waken soon and go through it all again! That doesn't put a fellow out onto the bottom of a coal-mine at five-thirty in any very keen mood for work—especially for work the most dangerous and grimy of any encountered to date.

On the way to a new "location," the gang of us went down some sharply inclined seams that were only eighteen inches thick! Furthermore, they had been bent over so far by some great convulsion of nature that they were at an angle of fully forty degrees—also upside down! So we slid down past the workers precisely as if we were on a glacier—in actuality sliding on the coal seam's roof!



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Finally, we came to a hole directly under us—a vertical opening in which a sort of rough scaffolding had been erected. When we had finally worked our way from one timber elevation down to the one beneath—very carefully so as not to fall or drop our bottles or lights—we at last reached a level passage fully one hundred feet beneath. Here, to my amazement, everybody hung up his sandwich bag and proceeded to take off his coat and shirt. Still worse, I had to follow the boss and the others as they proceeded to climb back up the scaffolding again till we were almost at the top. There we calmly started to work! The scaffolding was nothing but the cross timbers for holding apart the roof and the floor after the coal had been taken out of a narrow three-foot vein which nature had put into a vertical or upright position! The place is called “the ladder.” Finally we got some planks into a position to make a sort of runway. Whereupon the miners up above us commenced their work, their coal falling into the chute and descending just above my head. Unfortunately, just as I reached up to move a plank over to keep some of the particles from falling down my neck, a great piece gave two of my fingers a bloody and extremely painful bruise that will probably stay by me for weeks, if not for months. As we used our picks on the solid coal just ahead of us, I could look up and see through the planks a gleam of light. Always I got to thinking that this meant daylight up there—out through our attic roof. Then would come the highly disturbing thought that between us and sunshine were nearly 2,000 feet of the same coal seam, all threatening, except for the timbering of the craftsmen above us, to slide down upon our heads!



THE INSERTION OF TIMBER SUPPORTS WITH THEIR "TOP PIECES" AT CERTAIN DISTANCES IS DEFINITELY PRESCRIBED BY MINING LAW IN ALL COUNTRIES

The intricacy of such procedure is one reason why coal strikes cannot be ended by untrained "ex-tempore" coal-miners



Apparently my buddy wasn't bothered much by the idea. Except when he was inserting his timbers as rapidly as he got his coal down, he kept up an unceasing swing of his pick. Such incessant work I never saw. Every instant the stuff kept falling before his attack down into the darkness seventy-five feet beneath us. From down there we could occasionally hear the sound of the boy filling his cars. All this meant an amazing amount of dust. It was almost impossible to see my friend four or five feet away, and always his black back sent gleams of light like small rivers from the streams of sweat finding their way down through the grime. His lamp looked like a lighthouse through the heaviest of fogs.

The thought of letting my lamp fall to see what would happen fascinated me. The bosses had explained with unpleasant iteration how to be very careful because the vein is very gassy. Even if it weren't, the coal-dust must have made an explosive mixture of the greatest conceivable instability. Evidently this upright position of the seam makes the ordinary protection of ventilation impossible. So far as I could figure it, a pick point through the mica of the lamp would push us into instantaneous Kingdom Come—us and all the others in the same locality. Naturally my mind seemed to run continually on the sign seen each morning at the lamp house:

“In view of the recent disaster in —, a few miles away, which resulted in the death of forty workers, the management prays every miner here to exert the utmost care in the interest of the security of life . . .,” etc.

Not so very long ago, too, 1,400 men were entombed for twenty-one days—with, luckily, most of them saved. With such things in mind and the dust in my eyes and

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nose, it was impossible not to turn again and again to look at my lamp and the distance of my pick stroke from it, adding meanwhile what was perhaps more a prayer than a statement:

"Well, I'd like to assure the company that in their prayer they have my personal co-operation 100 per cent!—in fact, if desired, I'd be willing to take my assurance up to the office right this minute!"

At breakfast all the members of the gang expressed their preference for government control as the only conceivable buffer against the selfishness of "*les patrons*":

"You see, we're too much at their mercy. When they don't want us to work we can't. And when we do work it must always be at their price."

Still they have little sympathy, apparently, for the miners' and other unions. Two strikes here have recently been unsuccessful—in addition to the unfortunate general strike of a year ago last May.

"No, it is bad leadership that we suffer from. We've struck and struck again. Still we've never touched a *sou* from it all. For why? Well, no one knows. And in the general strike of 1920 the railway men—the ones we were supposed to be helping, you understand?—they kept on working themselves! And we—we lost our wages! What do you make of that?"

They are evidently bewildered—they hardly know what to try next. They would hardly be averse, I believe, to some moderate compromise which would give a little more guarantee that their continuous need of bread and butter, and a little cake, would be more sympathetically and more regularly taken care of. They

certainly have few of the marks of honest-to-goodness radicals. They all think of the good old days when a man got seven francs a day and had more left—at least as they now remember it—than now. To-day they get from twenty-two to twenty-five and twenty-six but they pay nearly half just for bed and bread and butter. When everything else is high, that's a pretty heavy proportion of the day gone before you can begin to do more than just exist—it leaves one, so to speak, bedded and boarded but still undressed.

To-day I didn't work anything like as hard as the others, but was nevertheless dog-tired when I finally reached home and got my shirt off. Then a fresh job—a really hard job—began. I was as black as an African. Scrubbing and scrubbing seemed to do little good even though the coarse soap was very painful to the eyes. Each time I would think to pass on to some other portion of my work, my pal would laugh and suggest that I take a look into the broken mirror. Alas, it was all too evident. Still harder scrubbing. After a good half-hour of it, I wanted to sit down and curse or cry—shame though it is to confess the desire for either of these forms of relief.

Of all that work and dirt down below, it is easy to see the necessity, if furnaces are to be fed, trains run, ore melted and people warmed. But it does seem pretty nearly needless that after a man has done that work, he should have to come back to such dreadful surroundings as here. Perhaps he wouldn't, except for the war. Just before it began, so they say here, arrangements had been made for installing mine baths. The peace has furnished too

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many other things to think about. In all the mines over at Lens the baths were in fine order before the invaders came—besides all sorts of such arrangements as cooking schools, nursing, pensions, etc.

But here, and now—at our little estaminet—well, I do have a soft spot for our fat and stolid landlord because he doesn't scold his wife or his children and does wash my back. But to-day, at least, he and all his works seem just outrageously dirty. I don't feel equal to describing them properly—too tired. The nastiness of it all requires something more than just prose. I wonder if a Walt Whitman, for instance, could come home, tired to the bone, and then manage to see anything beautiful in such conditions. If he wrote with his shoulders aching from working and then from scrubbing to get clean—with hands blistered by those dreadful, awkward shovels—I wonder if he could avoid getting off something like this:

“I see before me my plate of greasy soup  
And the unwashed spoon  
On the slippery table (never again any more of this soup  
‘Printanière’ for me—as long as I live!).  
And from the open window I catch the aroma  
Of the nearness of the chickens, the rabbits, the pigeons  
And the mildly protesting cow.  
Yes, I see before me the primordial chaos:  
The cataclysmic conglomeration of things worn out or about  
to be:  
The half-filled tubs of blue-blackish suds from miners' backs,  
The decrepit, toothless and discouraged scrubbing brushes,  
The empty wine bottles, prostrate in their sad, repentant  
uselessness.  
In the manure half overwhelmed they lie,

Like things dead, yet alive; gray ghosts of former services.  
The broken dishes still begging to help  
By holding a bit of soap or the shells of eggs,  
The half-split sabots and the broken mattock,  
Evidence of the landlord's strength (I wish he'd use it trying  
to clean up a bit!).

And then let one observe the rabbits—how calmly they fold  
their legs under them and,

Noses wiggling, ruminare philosophically on the litter of cabbage leaves beneath the rusty and half-fallen stove.

And the chickens! Ah, now do I behold one roosting peacefully upon the chair and yes, by my soul, upon my towel!  
(Oh, hang it all, this is too much! Why should I stand for it another day!)”

And so on—possibly ad infinitum, certainly ad nauseam.

As long as it is necessary to do it another day, I guess I'll enjoy my most pleasurable indoor sport—namely, the study of the time-table to see precisely when I can get away.

Doubtless I ought to be thankful that there is some place else to go. Yesterday evening the interpreter for the Polish laborers here reported that they are all very unhappy and consider themselves badly treated, but can't go back to Poland because there's nothing but idleness and war there. They don't earn enough here to bring their wives. On pay-day—every two weeks—the conditions, he says, are frightful over at the barracks, with the help of much alcohol and a few Polish women who stay under pretense of being servants. When he makes complaints he finds nobody authorized to pay any attention. Still worse, he sees no way out for himself:



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"My uncle in America—rich. When I write him—no answer come. Farm—beeg farm he got—in Jowa (Iowa)."

Still it must be granted that he's hopeful, for he confided that he has just discovered the secret of perpetual motion. All it needs to make it go and keep it going, he says, is "a little more force—just a little more force."

We're not the only unlucky ones. Two workers in near-by towns are reported killed yesterday by putting their picks into unexploded German shells. A little baby also was sent out of the world by coming upon an old German rifle. A drunken man appears to have gone to sleep on the railroad tracks—with the usual result.

Unlike these poor fellows, I know there is always for me a means of retreat to higher ground and more comfortable. So I'll stay a little longer—perhaps it may somehow, some day, be of value to them all. Anyway, it would help a lot if I could take a nap, as do my companions. It's too bad the afternoon flies here on the bed make that just as difficult as does my nocturnal bed-fellow.

The Coal Town,  
Saturday.

"No ventilation here," a new boss explained this morning as he took me off with him on a long walk from the bottom into an old section of the mine for a day of work "in rock." "No air at all. That's why all these timbers here have this white beard of clammy fuzz. See here! Yes, it's all rotting, and that's the wood rotting that should support the roof above our heads. It is not safe."

Still farther on he held up his lantern to show a great gash from which rock had fallen—it yawned ominously a full twenty feet or more above us.

“Very dangerous, very!” he said and shook his head after listening carefully for a moment.

I was willing to check with him completely: it certainly looked unsafe. So I moved along to indicate that I was satisfied and ready to get to some other equally interesting place—and safer. To my dismay he calmly took off his coat and showed me where to hang mine! When he went back for another timber his partner came up, went through the same head-shaking and opining of “Highly dangerous, highly dangerous!” Of course there was nothing to it but to take it calmly and roll up my sleeves. When we had got our shovels busy clearing up a place for building a stone wall, he would frequently stop and listen. Several times the crackling of the mass of loose stones was enough to make him jump back to the cover of the strongest timbers—with me only a shadow behind him. I have been in various places which looked worse to me. But I never saw miners themselves take a place quite so seriously. It was not pleasant. In addition, the work itself was in the nastiest mud and water, shovelling fallen stone away or bringing up fresh timbers. Worse still, it was obvious to eyes and nose that the chamber was very gassy. So it looked like a long and dreary, as well as a deadly dangerous day. Luckily, before nine o’clock a big boss came along and I jumped at his invitation to go with him on his inspection trip.

He covered an amazing amount of territory—walking

rapidly into the wall of darkness. One gang was working in the dusty din and clatter of the air-drills, hard at work pushing a new entry on through solid rock. He took a good look at the roof above them and then proceeded to pick down a half ton or so of loose stone that had hung almost ready to fall—scolding them for their carelessness. Later it took all my strength and skill to climb after him up several of those sharply inclined eighteen-inch or two-foot veins. We had to squirm our way, not on hands and knees, but on stomach and arms and toes. Even then the roof—or floor above us, because many veins were upside down, would somehow contrive continually to get into the small of my back. In order to make the roof or the bottom safe, and also to get a little more room, the miners clean out several inches of stone. But even that does not prevent the men whom we saw lying on their sides or crouched low between roof and floor, from keeping their picks going everlastingly for the full working day. The strange thing is to see how quickly you come to share with them their freedom from the tenderfoot's fear of the roof's crushing their slender little wooden supports and falling in upon them with its weight of hundreds of feet of solid earth.

In many places not even the boy loader can stand upright at the bottom of the incline. Several lads kept running every blessed minute, pushing out their cars through passages hardly higher than the car's top—sometimes for long distances. After stooping for rods and rods through some of these places, the finest thing in the world appears to be just to get to a place where you can stand upright! Many of the boys appear undersized

even for their fourteen or fifteen years. They must be strong or else suffer severe strain. It must be said, however, that a great deal more care is evidently given to lessening this strain by means of the up-keep of the cars and the levelling of the tracks than I have seen in America where car-pushing is a frequent cause of complaint.

Well, I suppose it's these initial years of "charging" (loading) and pushing these cars under the low roofs out to where the horses can come, that make these boys glad, later, to spend their hours pick in hand, crouched in those narrow inches between roof and floor. "*C'est l'habitude.*" That's doubtless their answer—or alibi—for not being farmers, for instance. That is doubtless, also, the reason the world gets as much coal as it does—that and the fact that a man earns more to get down a ton of this "narrow" coal than in a larger seam. (That does not necessarily mean that he earns more in a day's work.)

Speaking of "*habitude*," they say that several of the horses showed themselves not long ago the victims of it. During the last strike they were all taken up and quartered on a farm. One of them that had for years hauled its cars out to the "parting" or switch, six times a day, absolutely refused to make more than six trips with the plough across the field. Another that had had a shorter mine "trip" refused to go anywhere farther than its accustomed distance of fifty yards without turning around!

Even the girls in the district appear to form in early years the same "*habitude*" of hard horny-handed work. They don't come underground but most of the pushing and emptying of the cars on the tip is done by them and

by still smaller boys. Other girls are seen carrying heavy logs or unloading with their long shovels cars of sand or lime. A shortage of labor surely exists in the district. Of the foreign workers the biggest percentage is said to be Belgian. After that come Italians, Poles, Czecho-Slovaks, Spaniards, Greeks, etc. Of course the numerous Moroccans and Algerians or French colonists are hardly spoken of as foreign. All these outsiders—as in America—seem to be lorded over a good deal by their native-born fellow workers. They probably all help, too, to lower still further the level of the local patois. "*Ici*" (here) is generally "*ishi*," "*moi*" (me) is "*ma*," "*toi*" is "*tee*."

It was a great relief to learn that a new engineer here found it impossible to understand these workers when he first arrived, even though he was a Frenchman!

In spite of a fairly quiet French industry as a whole, there seems still to be plenty of demand for miners, probably because France always has used at least 20,000,000 tons yearly more than she produces. A soldier boy says he has had no trouble getting a promise of work as soon as he finishes his army service next month:

"No, I don't love being soldier. Not at all. . . . Well, for one thing, the food. . . . Yes, it's good—what one gets. But not enough of it."

The labor shortage is not enough, apparently to make much of a conquest over the ubiquitous high cost of living. The workers generally are far from happy. They sigh for the good old days. They seem hesitant about the company's new houses at three to five francs per room per month. They want to know the wages and living costs of America—with only a hazy idea of any



**FELLOW-WORKERS IN THE COAL PIT NEAR LENS**



**EVEN THE YOUNG GIRLS IN THE DISTRICT APPEAR TO FORM IN  
EARLY YEARS THE SAME "HABITUDE" OF HARD, HORNY-  
HANDED WORK**

**They don't come under ground, but most of the pushing and emptying of the cars on  
the tip is done by them and by still younger boys**



difference between the American of the North and of the South, or, say, Argentinian varieties. If they have a friend in, for instance, "Co-awl-gawt," and you don't understand their pronunciation of Colgate, you can see that they think you're an impostor!

Here at the boarding-house, the landlord has evidently been busy. The place looks much cleaner, thanks be! The prospects are hardly good, however, for his efforts lasting long, with the dogs, chickens, and rabbits continuing to enjoy "the freedom of the city." This afternoon a frightened chicken with a huge clutter and commotion suddenly flew into the window and almost into the face of the wife as she nursed the baby at her generous bosom. The child cried out in fear but the easy-going mother only shouted with laughter.

I have just told her I must get some sleep somehow—after the worst night yet with my dancing bedfellow. So I've played my last game of "*fléchette*"—its small arrows and target are found in every estaminet in the region, and that's saying a great deal because the small fee for an alcohol license appears to favor a bar in hundreds of homes. Am packed and ready to move on to the bigger town of Bethune, about three miles away.

My chum just now breaks in to say that he's walking over there to see his sweetheart—his wife it is that's in the hospital.

"Yes, perhaps," he shrugs his shoulders when I speak of the energy and enthusiasm of his boy. "But I'm afraid he'll not amount to much. Have you not noticed his eye? Is it not the eye of a fox? Yes. You see, he's had bad education. Instead of being in school, he spent



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his years as a prisoner—stealing from his captors is very bad for a boy when he's thirteen, is it not so?"

Have just been to thank the company official who furnished the job. He feels sure that his miners *at home*—not at an estaminet—are quite cleanly. The town appears to me to give small evidence of it. He feels, too, that in general the spirit of his men is good. Peaceful, I'd say, but hardly good. They speak too often of the driving necessity of work, with starvation in the offing if they don't.

Meanwhile, the Communist musicians in a French town are reported to have spoiled the party at an afternoon "*fête gymnastique*" by refusing to play the *Marseillaise*—"because it has been too much taken over by the conservative bourgeoisie!"

How times do change—with the old one-time radicals suddenly finding themselves tail-enders in the procession!

Meanwhile, too, the Communist paper, *L'Humanité* blames the whole Russian famine on to the present worldwide dry spell! It is to be noted, however, that a conservative Socialist up at the Lille convention of the "C. G. T." makes his stand for: "Revolution, yes, but for a progressive revolution, a revolution by full stomachs, not empty ones, as in Russia."

"I am not," still another announces, "I am not for dissociating the interests of the working class from the interests of society as a whole. Whether we like to admit it or not, the two are inseparably bound up together. I insist simply that at present we must not retreat. That is the first condition of advancing."

After the nights of poor sleep, the mornings of black and dangerous work, and the afternoons of filth, fatigue, and discomfort, I'll say that that's as much good sense as could be expected of any worker in the land.

## CHAPTER VI

### OTHER VICTIMS OF A NEW KIND OF WAR

Bethune,  
Pas de Calais,  
Sunday, Aug. 7.

A good night's sleep in a whole bed—a whole bed and a clean one—a tasty breakfast on a fairly clean tablecloth, more sleep, a wondrous dinner, a walk, and still more sleep. "Ah, but how all that is marvellous," as we French say, for one's body and mind and soul!

As the centre of the British sector, the town here has been badly shot up, especially near the main square. Comparatively little, also, appears to have been done to put things back into shape, though a number of builders are breaking the Sabbath with their plastering. The English evidently send a constant stream of visitors to their honored dead in the near-by cemetery. All signs make it evident that the population here has been considerably more prosperous than at Douai, for example. In fact a very imposing show was given this afternoon by the gentlemen of the district who, in their red coats, jumped their handsome and expensive horses over various gates, hedges, water-hazards, etc. This evening a grand ball and fête with a prize gymnastic troupe is under way, with plenty of colored lights and music in the very attractive city garden. A number of drunken soldiers and laborers, with much barroom singing, provide an unfortunate by-product of the festivity.

Everybody that tries to be anybody here in North France seems to think it necessary to lead something of a canine nature at the end of a string on Sunday afternoon or evening. Most of these exhibitions appear to be puppies of fox-terrier or similar breed. The aristocrats, of course, have police-dogs—"*chiens du défense*." At a private club I saw these being trained to attack suspicious characters at the word of command. A man in heavily padded and disreputable-looking clothes was submitting to their bitings and snappings for the sake of their education. He probably gets two francs, possibly three, per hour. That's my idea of a poor job!

Such things as this training of "defense" dogs remind one at every turn of the war that is past. Unfortunately they also suggest unpleasantly the thought of war to come. People don't seem to be able to get back very quickly to entirely peaceful ways after living for years so close to daily misery, fear, and death. That is doubtless one reason for the unexampled number of train robberies and murders which are causing wide-spread alarm all over France. That war baby known as the high cost of living is doubtless behind the smaller robberies and misdemeanors which fill the papers.

Altogether, it looks as though the people of France—up here in the north at least—have been wounded much more deeply than we outsiders have been able to appreciate. It is not simply that fathers have been killed, with families bereaved and put into poverty. That is bad enough. In addition, other families in great number have been broken up by the pressure of the abnormal personal and domestic relationships of the war period.

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Every newspaper now contains—in addition to the preposterous promises regarding remedies which we have driven out from our respectable columns—numerous advertisements of lawyers ready to secure divorces at a minimum outlay of time and money. Still other persons, young and old, have been given the abnormal attitudes and view-points sure to follow the years of prison or semi-prison régime—attitudes and view-points which will not fail to affect them quite unconsciously all the rest of their lives. The papers also tell of hundreds now or lately under trial for giving intelligence to the enemy or of being, in other ways, traitorously overfriendly with them.

Of course, this country here is not the normal France: it is devastated or invaded France. It is surprising to see how close its interests are tied up not only with the rest of France but with Belgium, and, in a way, also, with Germany. The maps show almost indiscernible boundary-lines and the newspapers and especially the trade papers, appear to pay the frontiers slight attention. Unskilled Belgian workers go back and forth between this district and their homes all the time. This is all very different from those days of sightseeing travel when we used to take boundaries very seriously: they meant changing trains, passing customs inspections, changing to new money, getting out fresh guide-books, etc., etc. Evidently Belgium is too much like France in language, money, and industry to make people here feel that way about it. Indeed, the threads of the cotton trade of this whole district a few miles to the north, seem to tie it up not only with Belgium but with America as well.

"In cotton," according to an industrial weekly published at Lille, "the event of the week has been the report of the Bureau of Agriculture at Washington, stating the condition of the harvest. The figure given has surprised the market and the prices have gone to higher levels which have had a distinctly unfavorable repercussion on the progress of (cotton) affairs here."

By the same token we will probably have some "repercussions" in America from the long-standing strike of the cotton employees here in the region and from that of the weavers which is expected shortly. Both are efforts to side-step any reduction of wages in the belief that the cost of living has not gone down to the extent claimed by the official figures of the State. Undoubtedly, too, America is interested in the report that the representatives of France to the coming conference of the League of Nations have been instructed to oppose the present efforts to make universal in France the eight-hour day. The report's appearance in an article on "France's Political Outlook" indicates how such matters come to be in the forefront here not only of industrial but of political thought. The statement continues to the effect that France has still so much work to do in order to catch up with the rest of the world that it should not be compelled to compete on an eight-hour basis with a Germany reported to be working generally ten to twelve hours.

Yes, it looks as though the editor of *Le Nord Industriel* has everything on his side when he goes so far as to say:

"To all economic activity you can apply the theory of communicating chambers—a change of levels in one

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country immediately produces a proportionate effect upon the levels in other countries."

The chances are that the war has made exactly that not only more widely true and more broadly compelling, but also more manifest and obvious—so much so as to require no longer the eyes only of the professional economist. In that case it may prove a vital force for bringing together the nations on the basis of mutual economic interests. One of the most reassuring activities now visible on the international horizon here is the way Loucheur for France and Rathenau for Germany appear to be agreeing upon a practical basis of paying reparations in materials rather than in money. What is most significant is that these gentlemen are the representatives, one in France and one in Germany, of the General Electric Company of the U. S. A.!

All of which is a highly gratifying thought to take to bed in the midst of scores of Bethune's ruined houses.

P. S.—Even the bill-boards help to give the impression which appears to explain a great deal about this people, namely that it is an elderly and long-established concern. To-day a large building bore the notice "The Mayor hereby decrees that refuse must not be deposited here—*by virtue of the law of 1791*" (!) A few days ago a statement regarding the acceptance of Spanish or Italian moneys at the post-office quoted as its authority the law of 1807. Warnings against the posting of bills often give their authority in the law of 1881.

Lille,  
Monday, August 8.

"Well, then, if you are going up there to find work in the steel plant," a French travelling companion said to

me this morning after I had told him my plans in monosyllabic answers to his questions, "then, of course, you must be French."

Of course I was delighted. But when I started to explain my Americanism, he interrupted:

"It is not necessary to explain, sir. I can see at once that your features are not French, but I should say without hesitation, Polish." (!)

It was amazing to learn that both he and the woman with him and another couple who chanced into the same compartment are strolling singers. Furthermore, they are members of a national—or international—Union of Strolling Musicians! At the steel town not far from Bethune we had coffee together. The woman was frank enough about her affairs:

"How long married? Ah, mon Dieu, too long! You see, I married the first man I met on the street. I haven't seen him in a year. . . . This man? Ah, a brave garçon he is. Always the fine gentleman and polite. So generous and kind. Always like this. . . . Divorce? Why trouble? Besides it costs thousands of francs."

Later I met the two walking out to the factory gate for the noon recess. He had on black glasses and was leaning heavily on her arm. He quickly snatched the black things off with a word about the dust, but I'm uncomfortably persuaded he was posing as a wounded soldier—even though he didn't try that at the restaurant. According to his jolly report in his splendid speaking voice, he had collected thirty francs already. Most of his audience of workers would envy him his profitable career.

The steel plant looks brand-new as the result of the 15,000,000 francs paid the company by the government



for damages done by more than 3,000 shells of assorted sizes delivered by the German artillery. The old battle front is only about three miles away. Although business is slow just now, the place manages to keep its 2,500 men fairly busy. Outside of a large group of Belgian laborers, the only foreigners are about fifty Portuguese soldiers who haven't yet gone home from the war. The blast-furnaces—of American design and patent—use ore from the newly developed district in Normandy near Caen. The open-hearth looks small but very efficient and up-to-date. The rolling-mills show an amount of hand labor that few American engineers would tolerate. Coal comes by canal from the mines near Bethune, doubtless through the huge canal-boat depot for which that town is famous.

The manager assured me that the workers are quite happy. Such assurance is usually sincere but not always valuable. Sorry that it seems unwise to stop for a job.

Between the steel town and Lille is an almost unbroken line of original battle front—including the town of Armentières, where the fighting was evidently extremely heavy. Altogether, the country makes a remarkable picture of rusty war-time damage alongside amazing peace-time reconstruction—in every way typical of present-day France. Great expanses of golden harvest-fields show here an active windmill and there a mass of barbed wire or an ugly, half-ruined "pill-box," or machine-gun shelter with its sinister slit peering out toward the enemy; here a few trees with wondrous green branches, there a forest reduced to naked telegraph-poles; here a gaping roof with leaning walls, there a group of tasteful homes under crowns of gorgeous red tiles.



#### BESSEMER CONVERTER

This, together with several blast-furnaces of American design and patent, managed to escape injury in a North France steel plant in which more than 3,000 shells were delivered by the invading artillery



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Adding the afternoon's group of telegraph wire-strings to all the other French artisans encountered to date makes it easy to describe the type—fairly well-built but not tall or large, with black mustache, naval cap with patent-leather visor, neat suit of blue overalls with double-breasted jacket buttoned tight to the neck, bicycle clips on trouser bottoms. In many cases it would not be wrong to add—"and a good-sized wad of cotton in each ear."

As to the women, I keep wondering whether the dreadful frequency of mourning apparel is the result of war-time rifles or peace-time religion. As in South America, it is necessary always to remember that social usage here makes a virtue of underlining the blackness of death. Long before the war, the institution of purgatory has made these countries appear the land of the buried but undecided—or religiously undisposed of—dead.

It must be added, however, that the same religion does not fail to underline similarly the importance of giving life here on earth. When to that emphasis is added the present patriotic effort to increase France's population, the results are sometimes spectacular. This morning's paper gives 136 lines of names of families which have received a gold medal for what might be called successful national and religious "production records." These lines appear to average 16.5 children each—or  $136 \times 16.5 = 2,224$  sons and daughters of "la Patrie." And that's for only two of France's 88 departments!

Still, something like this is undoubtedly called for by a people whose practically diminishing population has suffered the loss of 1,800,000 men—53 per cent of its

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manhood of fighting age!—also 600,000 homes and 100,000,000,000 francs of property.

One of the indications of all this, namely the cost of living, is put by the government at 336 per cent as compared with pre-war—incidentally almost exactly twice the present American figures. Here at Lille to-day a well-informed editor went so far as to express his own pessimistic disbelief in the figures as too low. Furthermore, instead of going down, he believes the present widespread drought is raising them, temporarily at least. So he sympathizes with the local textile strikers. He is also extremely blue now that the government has failed to get any German reparations money and so finds it necessary to suspend payments for damages incurred by the smaller manufacturers after it has advanced such large sums to many of the larger companies. I must confess that an hour or two on the streets to-night make one feel with him that local industry is languishing sadly at the moment. All the restaurants have plenty of good orchestras or, at worst, very noisy though really musical automatic instruments. Everything is all right except the people. They aren't in evidence. "I have piped for ye, and ye have not danced."

Nevertheless, all the reports show that this department of the north has made a much better record for reconstruction than the other devastated counties—its present percentage of "reconstitution" is 83.2 of concerns employing 20 persons or more now again in operation. The amazing thing is that the district has done so well, considering all it suffered from the new type of warfare so fully demonstrated here as well as at Lens.

It appears that in February, 1916, over 200 German

scientists and experts made a detailed study of the industries of all the regions of France held by them. The resultant 500-page report was sent by the government to all the chambers of commerce and other commercial and economic organizations in the empire—"for the purpose of giving a view of results which will probably follow for Germany from the destruction of certain branches of industry of our enemies." The report gives minute information as to the exact kind of machines which have been destroyed and which will be necessary for the reconstruction, which should, therefore, be presently manufactured in Germany so as to be ready to sell—to France—when the war is over! Very specifically it indicates, also, the different products the international markets for which will be open to German producers because the established French producers will be out of commission. The number of months following the war likely to pass before France can make any successful effort to regain these markets, the engineering experts calmly proceed to estimate with the utmost exactitude! "The French sugar-making industry can be expected to disappear completely from all later possibility of successful competition in any foreign markets," is one phrase. In order to get full credit for the government and its careful thoughtfulness for its business men, the report also details whether this or that particular industry was damaged mainly by the ordinary mishaps of war or by the far-sighted economic mandates of the government. It takes particular pains to show that the chief damages in the way of ruined factories and machinery are to be credited to the latter, rather than to the ordinary military operations of the army!

The invaders' failure, so far, to pay for this cold-blooded

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economic and non-military destruction is, of course, a huge factor in causing the greatest "general strike" in history—the present strike of the world's buyers. So before going on further with France I'm glad to be stepping across the boundary to-morrow for a short stop-over in Belgium and then a look into the central power station of the world's most recent unhappiness—Germany.

*Later.*—The twin cities of Roubaix and Tourcoing, between Lille and the Belgian frontier, look surprisingly well built and well equipped with up-to-date textile factories in spite of the suddenness and recentness of their development as manufacturing centres famous throughout the textile world. The streets, too, were peaceful as could be, in spite of the newspaper reports of the textile strikes and the general unhappiness among the strikers.

## CHAPTER VII

### A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF BELGIUM,

Liège, Belgium,  
Sunday, August 14th.

No wonder these Belgians join the French in their difficulty and hesitation in getting back to a normal state of mind. Almost every day this past week has been the seventh anniversary of the capture of some historic point of national defense back in those awful days of August, 1914—capture and, worse, pillage. Even upon the busy streets it is easy to imagine the gray lines moving on and on, always in the direction of France. Post-cards showing the outrages committed are still on display and sale. Nobody would be more pleased than I to find few such signs. But here they are and here they remain as both symptoms and causes of the state of mind of the western Europe of to-day. And that state of mind is, after all, the only place in which to seek the seeds of the western Europe of to-morrow.

The picture gained these last few days of the life of the Belgian worker is not an encouraging one. Everybody has to work and work hard, that's sure. The men do look huskier and more capable of it than the French. In fact, they much resemble us Americans—possibly as the result of the Flemish blood. All seem to agree that the Belgian worker in general is not as skilled as the French—also that the country's foreign trade is built largely upon low wages. In Charleroi, the chief coal



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town, the smoke, the untidy homes, the bad smells, the heavily loaded burros, the wooden shoes, the dirty children and the huge dumps of "gob" from the mines, make life look considerably harder than, for instance, in the coal towns of Wales. The coal is reported of high quality: otherwise its working would not be profitable from the seams located as much as 3,000 feet and more below ground. All attempts to get down proving fruitless, the time had to be spent in talking with the men and with some of the hundreds of young girls working, in the roughest of clothes, at emptying the heavy cars in the tipple. An American soldier appears to have put it about right:

"They treat the women here like dogs, and they make the dogs work."

In October a national eight-hour law becomes effective. Compulsory public education, legislated just before the war, went into effect only last year. The corollary of all this is seen in the seriousness of drunkenness among the workers. Mr. Rowntree of England estimates almost one-sixth of the worker's income as going into alcohol. Recent legislation for limitation along this line requires that spirituous liquors must now be bought in quantities of not less than two litres at stores and not be consumed on the premises. The saloon-keeper claims—naturally enough—that there is more drunkenness now that the worker takes his stuff home and treats the whole family. Others complain that the legal minimum is too large and expensive for the average worker. Meanwhile the emphasis upon beer and wines has enormously increased the importation of heavier beers and ales from England and of wines from Spain and Portugal. Ac-

according to my friend, the saloon-keeper, these last contain from 28 to 40 per cent alcohol! It all makes it look certain that legislation permitting beer and light wines is extremely difficult of enforcement. Most observers, however, seem to believe that there is considerably less drunkenness than formerly.

Hardly half the workers are in the unions and these are much split up. The most aggressive group is of fairly radical Socialist persuasion, fighting the battles of class enmity on the lines laid down by Karl Marx. Because these are felt to be pretty thoroughly against religion, the Catholics have organized a large membership in their "Christian unions," working toward co-operation between worker and employer. In between these two interests there is a body of neuter or non-religious unions, numbering several hundred thousand members.

On all sides people evidently find the margin of living pretty narrow. Even in the restaurants frequented by clerks, throngs come in, buy a cup of coffee or a glass of beer and unwrap their packages of sandwiches. "H. C. L." has gone up close to 400 per cent. A local newspaper dispute says volumes about the local working man's standard of living.

"Our esteemed contemporary, the labor paper," so an "upper class" newspaper argues; "figures a standard of living requiring not less than one hundred francs weekly for a family of three. We believe seventy-five is more reasonable. We notice that in the higher schedule meat appears once a day for every member of the family. To us this seems an undue luxury justifiable only for the sustenance of the family's bread-winners." (1)

Perhaps my French landlady's conscience, as well as

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her pocketbook, was responsible for the frugality of her meat-fork. "How it is pleasant to recall" the easy-going ways of my American landladies with their heaping plates of lamb stew or "two fried," and the never-failing "stack of wheats"! It would be interesting to know what influence that frugal fork has on such notices as are to be seen on the walls of some of the houses in the laborers' suburbs here to-day:

"Comrades, come to the meeting of protestation against the continued exploitation by your masters! The time has come for us to put an end to it all and rise in our night," etc., etc.

The famous "Maison du Peuple," maintained by a federation of thirty-eight different national unions, besides carrying on a great variety of health and other social and educational activities, fights the cost of living by co-operative buying and selling. Its stores, restaurants, and movie theatre appear to do a huge business. Upstairs in the offices of one of the union officials was to be found much the same discouragement as in similar circles in France:

"At present the increase of unemployment necessitates the practice of passive acceptance. Naturally we cannot fight at a time when our employers would only be too pleased to have us strike and get ourselves off the payroll. So we try to keep thinking of the big gains we have made within the last few years. You see, before the war, labor here had almost no rights. Men were arrested not only for striking but even for talking with each other about striking. To-day the labor vote really counts in the government. It is the war that helped the middle and

upper classes to realize that the working man had saved the country. Now they are willing to treat him better. Before, compulsory service in the army mainly affected labor because well-to-do people could always pay a slight penalty and then hire a worker to take their places. . . . Of course, we cannot work out our own salvation here in Belgium as we would like. That is because we are surrounded by Germany, Holland, and France. We have always to think of them—always. There are not so many Communists amongst us, but we certainly are against the present system of society which allows the masters to put hundreds of thousands of men off the job the moment it is no longer to their pocket's interests to keep them busy—especially when 80,000 houses destroyed by the war need to be rebuilt, in addition to the 160,000 which represents the ordinary 20,000 constructed every year in pre-war times. . . . As to alcohol, well, all I can say is that there used to be hundreds of workers in the hospital with delirium tremens; now only a few score."

As everywhere over here, the present appears always rooted in that recent past which dates from August, 1914. Here is the young woman stenographer, finally found for some copying:

"Four years I was in England—just in time my mother and I got out of Ostend. Our father would stay to see after our house. His body was found in the ruins after the first day of bombardment. . . . No, we do not expect to get the money promised. The government is soft with promises but with money very hard. . . . Now my mother keeps a shop and I work, as you see. That is not so bad. But—well, you see, I had expected to

marry my cousin—that was before the war. You see, then I was of a family fairly rich. Now he must marry another. His father has lost much by the war also. So he must use all his fortune to give his daughter the largest possible ‘dot’ for her marriage. If the family does not plan carefully it will lose its position. . . . No, I would not let him marry me because for that his father would cast him off. And that is impossible. He is only twenty-five years old and a musician. He is not sure he can make it go alone. . . . That may cause the usual, what we call, ‘marriage of four’: he and the girl he marries do not love each other so they may find each another friend. But I shall never be one of the four—not at least as long as my mother and sister live. Besides, for me my mother has already picked out a husband. I do not like him and have said so, but that will not make great difference. . . . But you were dictating, sir?” (Business of wiping away tears.)

Evidently the political as well as the family problem here is highly complex. The Flemish people learn French, but the Walloons or near-French find Flemish too hard and not very usable. Every town has a name in each language. Tirlemont in one is Thiemen in the other. The possibility of separating into two states or of splitting off, one to Holland, the other to France, appears under much discussion, as I imagine it has long been. The need of increasing the state’s income is evidently almost as urgent as in France, seeing that the Belgian franc suffers a little more depreciation. Business men are said always to have in mind that the government is anxious to get hold of profitable enterprises. At present it runs

a line of turbine steamers on the Channel in connection with the nationalized railroads. Luckily the government telephone service is a little better than the French. Judging from the newspapers, the population takes about as little interest in the affairs of the rest of the world as does France. Cotton is used in the ears of the average citizen about as much as across the border.

Here to-day it becomes extremely evident that the invaders must have profited enormously from adding the country's war resources to their own. On all sides are coal-mines, steel plants, and chemical and fabricating establishments of all sorts, not to mention a network of rivers, canals, and railroads. The abundance of all these possessions is made all the more impressive by the sight of numerous cattle and prosperous harvests in the field—in general, the restoration of normal conditions considerably beyond that of near-by France.

At the German consulate yesterday, a Hollander told of selling all the German-made hosiery he could find to the merchants of both Belgium and England at prices 30 and 40 per cent below all competition. Perhaps, after all, the interest of all of us in the dollar furnishes a salutary antidote for the emotions which would retain the old hatreds and so maintain the world in its old uproar.

The odd thing is that in the midst of all these affairs of international weight, the load which bears most heavily upon my own spirit at the moment comes from the amazing ability of a second-class waiter in a plain restaurant here to look down upon me and my third-class clothes—in spite of his own ill-fitting waiter's coat and a greasy shirt-front, soiled and frayed like an expired patent of

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nobility. It is strange how little satisfaction even tasteful food gives when every glance from others serves as a push down toward the bottom of one's self-respect. It takes much effort to overcome such obstructions and get the frame of mind of the woman caretaker met yesterday in a Brussels washroom—singing cheerfully as on her knees she made her tiles shine:

“Yes, every day here for seven years, and every day the place rewards me with its being clean, you understand? And always, too, the men are gentlemen. So I am always happy. . . . On Sunday, yes, of course, always to mass and the confessional. . . . Yes, always happy except when for some reason I must leave at night without putting all in order and must come in to find my room with a dirty, ugly face for starting in the day. Ugh, that I do not like—till I have it smiling again. Good day, m’sieu’!”

## CHAPTER VIII

### KRUPP'S AND THE CANNON CAPITAL

Essen, Ruhr District,  
Monday, August 15.

So this is Germany!

Yes, and the industrial and war-making centre of it, too. For most of the afternoon has been spent in the huge and somewhat forbidding office-building which bears the mighty name of Krupp.

Unfortunately no job can be given me: foreign-speaking people are not yet popular again. Even my promised trip through the plant is to be on the understanding that all conversation with the workers is "*streng verboten*."

I hope that the visit will make it easier to understand how all these people earn their living by day in order to spend the evening overflowing the sidewalks out into the streets—unless they join the crowds who enjoy the small orchestras in the beer-halls and wine-rooms. Essen is hardly going as yet full steam ahead, but the city of munitions and mines certainly looks busy to-night. So does the whole group of machinery and steel towns passed through this early afternoon on the way up from Cologne. Huge tall smoke-stacks by the dozen are in sight almost every moment of the way. Many of them have a circular water-tank half-way up their height which gives the chimney a striking resemblance to the "fighting top" of a battleship. Not inappropriate, considering the way Essen in particular and this whole Ruhr district in gen-



eral sent to the war fronts on land and sea their trainloads of shells, guns, armor-plate, locomotives, and munitions of every kind.

Unluckily the most outstanding impression of the day is very closely connected with those same suggestive chimneys. It is exactly the impression I had hoped not to receive here—certainly not so quickly. It is this: Everybody here is apparently hating the French with all their powers of hatred. Everybody, apparently, is hoping for the coming of "*Der Tag*"—the day of revenge.

"To-day hardly a German boy picks up his knife at the table without uttering the wish that with it he might go to Paris and avenge the wrongs of the Fatherland." These were the words this afternoon of an important citizen whom my letters made it possible to meet.

"If France had not so insisted upon every last tittle of the outrageous Versailles treaty," he continued, "and then committed the huge psychological error of putting German populations under the supervision of colored troops—I have seen them on duty in some of our greatest cities, yes, with my own eyes—then perhaps this dreadful new war of hate would not have made such progress amongst us."

Everybody talked with so far has almost the same testimony—including the young man on the train who had lost the ends of three fingers from a French hand-grenade. No, he was not for fighting at once!

"Just now, of course, we've not got men enough."

Strangely enough, nobody appears to hold anything against either England or America. All are evidently too busy hating France! Here is the way a calm and

capable industrial executive sees the present state of the world this afternoon:

"Yes, Lloyd George is coming to see the danger to England of a France that will not only own most of Europe's iron ore, in addition to the coal of the Saar, but also control indirectly through Poland, where there is much French capital, the coal and the iron and steel plants of Upper Silesia—besides hoping with all her heart to get her foot into the mines and factories of this district here. Such an industrial France could wipe British as well as German steel out of the world's markets within six months, and Lloyd George knows it.

"Upper Silesia is for France only a sort of second-best substitute for this district here of the Ruhr. Our coal here is much better—more cokable, for instance, than the Saar coal. With France in control here, the industrial heart of Germany would be under France's heel and all our industrial resources would be in her hands. During the days when Germany was deciding whether to refuse to pay and so to permit the occupation of the Ruhr, France had at Düsseldorf—in the regions already occupied by the Allies—hundreds of her best engineers. Each of these had his instructions as to which coal-mine or steel plant he was to find and what he was to do to put it under his immediate control.

"It is much better for all the world that France should have to send over here some of her business representatives to buy our coal and that we should have to send ours to buy her iron—that is much better than that we should have a supply of her generals and colonels drinking wine in our restaurants here in the Ruhr, is it not so?

"The self-determination of peoples may be right—your President Wilson evidently believes so. But much better is the 'self-determination of raw materials.' The peace of the world now, as always, depends much more upon that than upon the self-determination of peoples. That it is that makes nations friends or enemies: whether these supplies make the nations depend upon each other for wholesome exchange and trade or whether they make them too independent to be friendly—or too dependent to be able to exist on a self-respecting basis."

I had hardly expected to hear so much sense from an official of the house of Krupp.

As it is, the soldiers of Great Britain, France, and Belgium throng the streets and restaurants at Cologne, and indeed the whole of the occupied area along the Rhine ending at Duisberg, only twenty minutes away from here. As it is, too, the chief thing on the mind of both France and Belgium, at least, is the fear that German troops will one day again—and before long—appear unexpectedly at, and within, their borders for the demonstration of their burning hate. Only a day or two ago a Brussels paper derided a prominent Socialist who returned from Germany to announce that he found everybody there so sick of war that Belgium could enjoy at least fifty years of unadulterated peace and prosperity:

"Unfortunately, this man is the same person who gave us exactly the same assurance in the late spring of 1914! . . . And with us to-day the situation is even more dangerous than then. To-day we have the German enemies without, while within our borders we have the disloyal Communists and Bolsheviks."

It is this same kind of fear that made France and the rest of the world feel the necessity of imposing the hard conditions of the peace—the able-bodied fear born of forty years of fear fulfilled. Those fear-born conditions have, in turn, caused the heaped-up hatreds here. This, in turn, goes to justify that fear. And so the awful circle revolves, growing more hateful and more fearful and more hopeless at every dreadful turn.

Germany groans at the huge sum of indemnity, but the possibility of a reckoning—an unvictorious reckoning—appears hardly to have been kept in mind during those days of the quick crossing of Belgium. It is hardly too much to say that each and every anniversary of all those awful days will cost Germany unhappiness, if not money, for a long time to come. This morning over in Belgium, for instance, the front page reminds that: “Seven years ago to-day came the news of the fall of the Fort of Lonciu (near Liège),” with the details of the heroic resistance of a handful of brave martyrs.

The trip through southeastern Belgium luckily serves to make this whole warring Europe a little easier to understand. The hilly scenery of the last few hours up to the German border is so entirely different from the plains around Brussels that it helps to show how the geological conditions of Europe provide an amazing amount of geographical variety in an extremely small space. This not only helps to modify somewhat the dispositions of the different groups of inhabitants but also, throughout the centuries of poor communications, to hold them surprisingly wide apart. Geology changes people's jobs and tools, for one thing.

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"This engine here," said the Belgian engineer when I clambered up into the cab at a division point, "is of German make because we have to have the strongest we can get for this hilly country. If it had better tubes it would be fine in every way—almost as good as the Americans they're using much for the freight trains over here: they're stronger still. These hills make us work harder than we should, too, because we get only bad Belgian coal. Look at it! Nothing but dust, except for those briquettes. . . . Well, me, I believe it is because some of our government railway officials have too many shares in mines—mines of bad coal. . . . No, I'd rather work for a private railroad—that is, not a government one. Here we have too many functionaries with white collars, high hats, and even higher salaries. . . . I get about 800 francs a month here and I've served my years, you understand, as day-laborer about the yards and then as fireman. That gives me enough to eat but nothing for any fine house, I assure you. . . . Ah, yes, we do try to keep it nice and clean. You see my partner—I mean the other engineer—we run each day, alternately, the same two engines. So we get to know them—like our wives—yes, and to care for them, in the same way. In America I understand that is not so: an engineer over there each day gets an engine he does not know. How can he care for it—or understand—as he should? It's a pity—a great pity."

It is a positive relief to recall his pleasure in his job, and his shining engine in contrast with the discouraging testimonies of this afternoon. It is amazing to get so quickly an impression so definite and so depressing—a

feeling of such confusion and despair over the possibility of the world's ever getting away from its past and the bad habits which that past developed.

Still, perhaps we can all break away some day. Even Krupps have broken away from one habit and started something new, according to my official friend. He told how a group of their workers had complained that the gold fillings and especially the gold crowns of their teeth did not stand the gritting they had to go through when the men lifted the heavy weights of hot or cold steel. So the plant dentist—with the help of the alloy research department—started to pioneer a new line. As the result, 1,500 Krupp workmen are to-day wearing steel-crowned teeth!

For one I'd be glad to see Krupps become famous for the steel teeth of peace now that the allies have pulled, or at least done their best to pull, the establishment's highly noted teeth of war.

Maybe sleep will make the prospect of the world's ability to pull the teeth of Mars, as well as of Krupp, look a bit brighter.

Essen,  
Thursday night.

It is easy—unpleasantly easy—to get the "feel" of the big war here to-day.

"In those days we were turning over to them all the war-supplies our industrial army here of 115,000 men and women could furnish." Our conductor had just showed us the rooms up in the tower of the Krupp office-building where, during the war, the army and navy ordnance officials lived. Doubtless, they often stood on the

same high balcony where we were and looked over the same square miles of plant. "Of course, we made nothing then not helpful to war. But in normal peace times before the war, it is worth noting that 95 per cent of our entire output by tonnage was in ships, farm machinery, and other non-military materials—in spite of our fame as nothing but makers of cannon. During the war we increased our space by over 70 per cent. Since the war (note voice lowered and smile erased) our manufacture of war materials is, of course, practically abandoned. Now we have only about 50,000 workers. Of these about 3,000 mine coal in the pits which are directly beneath the plant. They go down by those tips you see there. Right over there in that big building we constructed the 'mystery gun' which bombarded Paris."

Down below in one of the huge buildings we saw the great rolls at which the massive armor-plates had earlier been made—now covered with rust. In another place car-wheels and rims for locomotives are being fabricated. (A recent news item tells of the formation in Berlin of the world's largest locomotive trust.) Besides the new Krupp locomotives, sewing-machines and even typewriters are soon to be made. Who knows but that in a year or two "Kruppsche" baby-carriages will be so popular that the advertisements will inform us that "children cry for them."

The working conditions vary greatly in the various departments according to age. They would hardly be called excellent. Of course, we could not possibly see the entire plant in a visit of a few hours. Afterward it was interesting to see six or seven hundred boys and

mutilated soldiers being taught various kinds of more or less skilled work. The company bank reports 30,000 active accounts. Besides paying interest at 5 per cent, the company gets up a little sporting interest for their depositors by giving them each a chance at a semiannual lottery for considerable prizes. Some of the workers ought to have a good deal of money to invest—or gamble with—in this way. At the very large, clean, and comfortable boarding-house for unfamilied workers, room and two meals cost only 11.50 marks per day—with the average unskilled worker earning about fifty. Both these figures represent an increase of about tenfold over pre-war. Nothing but photographs would do justice to the thoroughly attractive cottages furnished workers worn out in the Krupp service, each group in a colony by itself, married, unmarried, widows, widowers, etc., etc. The hospital also looks as clean and up-to-date as one could wish.

"I own this—and these, my people. I will take care of this—and them," one of the family of owners is reported to have said.

That is the only fault that could be found—"paternalistic"—"patriarchal," is the word used here. The Krupps would doubtless admit it, without a murmur. They have been making steel here since 1812, passing the whole works down from father to son. To-day the head of it all is the husband of the sole surviving daughter, and he has taken the Krupp name—Count Krupp von Bohlen. The combined tradition of good wages, good care, and absolutism make it difficult to put things on a somewhat more democratic basis, much as some of the officials are now said to desire it.



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All the officials evidently take their jobs and their different statuses and importances quite seriously. Our guide never gave the slightest look at ordinary workers, but demonstrated much elaborate hat-tipping and bowing every time we came up to and departed from anybody having the look of an over-foreman or department head. On the whole, it looked much like a huge family affair, and peaceful enough. It brought something of a shock to see the boys mending a machine belt made up of little bolts and tiny pieces of paper.

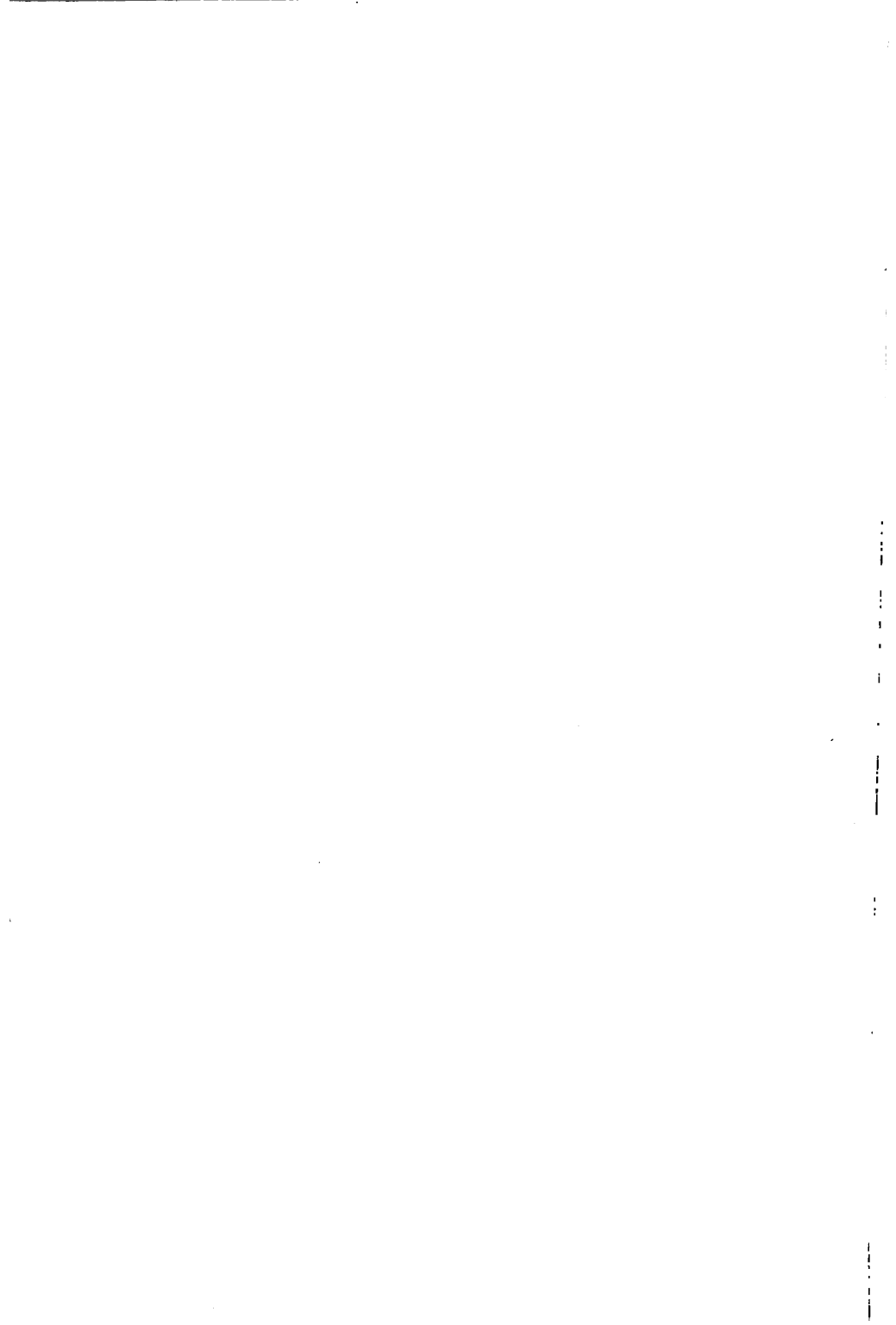
"Of course, we had no leather in those war days," the boss explained.

"If I had known I was to meet an American," exclaimed a Saxon farmer who was visiting his first steel plant, "I should have brought along some pictures of the way these fiendish Poles are mutilating their German and English captives, including officers. Barbarous, they are, these Poles. They are not human, the way they make war!"

Of course, the party had plenty to say about the French and the ungodly severity of the peace terms imposed by France and, so it appears to them, by France alone. All approve completely of the view-point of a nationally famous Professor Oncken of Heidelberg whose lectures on "World History and the Versailles Treaty" I found a few nights ago on a bookstore counter. He claims that the treaty is the Great Betrayal of History—that the armies of Germany merely thought it better to quit because the enemy offered in the "Fourteen Points" the attractive terms of "No annexation, no contributions, and no penalties or indemnities." The German generals



"THE THOROUGHLY ATTRACTIVE COTTAGES FURNISHED THE WORKERS WORN OUT IN THE KRUPP SERVICE. EACH GROUP IN A COLONY BY ITSELF, MARRIED, UNMARRIED, WIDOWS, WIDOWERS, ETC."



having decided to sign up on this basis, they were suddenly given something entirely different, and by that time it was too late to get back their arms.

All that, of course, is on the basis of German armies entirely undefeated, also, it would seem, of a civil rather than military understanding of the famous points—an understanding upon which, surely, no German commander could have based his decision to ask for a truce. What the professor does not elucidate is the nature of the precise terms discussed with Foch before the German generals actually decided to lay down their arms.

I confess I could get more out of such a soul-searing acknowledgment not of defeat but of betrayal if there weren't to be seen on the streets almost as many "Streng Verboten" signs as before—also almost as many hotels and streets and things labelled "Kaiser," "Kaiserlich," and "Hohenzollern." One railroad postal car yesterday showed this last crossed off, making it "Reiches Post." Unfortunate on the stranger, also, is the influence of the popular style which makes nearly every man's head into a close-clipped bullet-shaped cranium suggestive of so much dreadfulness during the war. It has evidently become universal since my days at Berlin University, when we used to see dozens of students thus barbered in order to show the scars they had won by their duelling. My German chum there was very proud of himself after his opponent—and his doctor—got through with him even though his head was nothing but a ball of bandages with a glass tube for a mouth. Through it he managed to say:

"My friend, Fritz, he has fought already five 'Men-

suren,' and had only twenty stitches. But I—I have fought this one time only and to-day the doctor gave me forty-three!"

"All that man could do to prevent it I have done, but my skin it is so healthy that all my wounds are healing and will leave no scar. It is terrible!" he confided to me sadly some weeks later.

With these bullet-heads go, generally, a very narrow-brimmed straw hat, a white and very high stiff collar, a cane, and, quite often, a frock coat—altogether an amazing amount of style, formality, and grandeur for a people which feels as badly as the professor states and my new acquaintances testify. Also for the fathers and brothers of boys and girls who are still eating the bread of charity. Everybody testifies that the Quakers have done a wonderful work feeding hundreds of thousands of children during the war. There seems to be plenty of justification for continuing to give one square meal per day to a comparatively small number now. This number is more and more limited to those who are found by expert examiners to have suffered serious impairment or stunting during the lean years of the blockade.

Among all the testimonies of hopelessness and bitterness, and national blamelessness—encountered in talking with the owners of those close-cropped heads—it was a relief to come upon one man of rather distinguished position this afternoon:

"No, it was not the result of the way our generals made war. They merely did what they were told and they tried to do it thoroughly. It was the fault of our statesmen. It was they—with the help of the Kaiser—who

brought it about that Germany came to have no friends among the nations.

"Yes, if Upper Silesia were taken from us, we might have a revolution and a Kaiser again. No, not *the* Kaiser. He is too old. And not the Crown Prince. But perhaps Eitel Fritz, for instance. He is popular. But he would have to consent to be a constitutional monarch, as in England."

It all seems a dreadful mess. The worst of it is that each day brings a better understanding of how all these nations here are not only mixed up with each other *now* but have been so mixed up for centuries. So the mess is not only a German mess. It is a European mess. What's worse still, I see no possibility of our keeping very far away from it, much as we should like to. And if we are forced to get closer—where its arms and tentacles can so easily pull us still closer—then there's evidently one thing we've just got to do. We've *got* to try to *understand* it better.

At this hour of the night, that makes me feel almost as lacking in hope as are these Germans. But not so full of hate, and for that, at least, I can thank God sincerely.

Essen,  
Friday.

This region is certainly Germany's "Pittsburgh District." To travel through it is to pass one almost continuous line of tall, fighting-top stacks protruding from great factories and steel-works.

Like so many others, the plant we visited in a nearby town gets the coal for its coke ovens and blast-furnaces

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from seams directly beneath. It belongs to Thyssen, before the war reputed the country's steel king next to Krupp. The company is noted for its attention to the well-being of its 50,000 or more workers, though it can hardly be said to set any pace in that direction which would particularly bother our most progressive American employers except for its eight-hour shifts, with Sunday off in all departments except the blast-furnaces. The clubs or boarding-houses showed every degree of luxury and the lack of it—all at very reasonable prices, as also the coffee, sandwiches, bottled waters, and beer sold to the workers and their families.

"They're planning a strike. They see the cost of living going always up, and they claim they must have more wages." So the landlord explained as we came upon a group of men in one of the best "bachelors' bunk-houses" I've seen in a long time.

This particular district saw the worst of the outbreak in March, 1920, which, begun by the reactionaries and taken advantage of by the radicals, appears to have frightened the republicans and the moderates considerably. For two weeks the uproar continued, with a total of more than 150 killed before the national troops got things set right. Just now nobody appears to take the radicals very seriously.

"Everybody's too tired to make an outcry," the speaker was waiting outside a mine to try to get a job, and a chance at the sixty to eighty marks they manage to make. "After four years of fighting we have no energy left. It makes us feel good to have a chance at enough to eat—especially now that 'worklessness' is spreading.

I come from over near Poland. There is no work there. Here have I a friend—my chum he was, in the navy during the war. I hope he can help me stay here.”

“As for me,” explained one of the officers of a large factory, “I have had enough and more than enough of war. If only the peoples themselves understood each other better! But how can they, as long as the newspapers talk only of wars and hatreds and distrusts? These it is—these false newspapers—that are the murderers of the peoples of the earth! . . . In business we try only to find new methods and new markets. One of our engineers goes to your country only next Monday. In coal and ore loading machinery you are already far ahead of us: he goes to learn and perhaps to buy. That helps to understanding and good-will.”

“We were forced into the war. We could not help ourselves!” another official exclaimed with tears in his voice. “And now we are ‘occupied’ and compelled in all ways to bow to the Supreme Council of the allies. But that council will learn some day that there is a Being in the heavens who is more supreme than they! He will redress Germany’s wrongs! And France—how hateful! But France must learn that if you would milk a cow you first must give her fodder!”

I wonder what emotional experience—perhaps the loss of a child during the blockade—has given so passionate a tone to his thought and voice. At any rate, he wanted badly to be friends to us: “I have a sister in America. . . . Yes, she is in Sao Paulo, Brazil.”

It is unpleasant to think that perhaps within a few years some of the children of to-day will be hating most



of the world outside of Germany because of their experience this afternoon. At Duisberg a great bridge spans the Rhine and the various basins which make for thousands of river and canal-boats what is said to be the world's greatest inland harbor. Half-way over the bridge are the sand-bag and barbed-wire pill-boxes of the Belgian soldiers representing the allies. These guards have to enforce a rule forbidding more than two persons under certain conditions and more than ten under others to pass. As we came by, a crowd of little boys and girls under the leadership of a few young teachers were zigzagging back and forth across the roadway in the utmost fear and confusion, their frightened and uncomprehending faces turned toward the soldiers, precisely like a lot of bewildered sheep. And all the guards could do was to utter guttural sounds which nobody understood though I think they were intended to be German. Finally, the dismayed teachers and panicky youngsters turned back—probably to remember their fright for a long, long time.

Other children are said to have similar cause to remember this carrying of the war of peace, as it were, into their own town: they were kept out of their classes for some time because it was necessary at first to quarter the soldiers in the schoolhouses. Bad feeling is also reported from crowding several thousand soldiers into the homes in small towns whose workers have to be away on their jobs elsewhere throughout the week. Of course, that is much the same thing that occurred in so many French homes with the soldiers coming there sometimes as deadly enemies, other times as allies.

In the restaurants the waiters seem to have suffered

a relapse from the great day when, after "the Revolution," they voted to abolish the undemocratic institution of tips. It doesn't seem to have "stuck." It is probably lucky that it occurred to me suddenly this evening that neither they nor the near-by owners of some of these close-cropped heads were enjoying my writing on picture post-cards showing the ruins of Louvain!

Essen,

August 20.

"Amerikaner? Ach, I was German prisoner with the American army. And when I came back, my friends they hardly knew me—so fat I was. They're splendid, those boys! I ate better there as prisoner than in our army, and, yes, better than I can eat now. You see, we get here only thirty-three marks a day."

He was a post-office employee of about twenty-three. His case is said to be much that of all groups in the public service. With the present exchange value of the mark at a little over a cent—eighty-five marks to the dollar—thirty-three marks hardly pays for a modest supper. That suits the American visitor but makes serious business for a local bread-winner.

"A '*Beamter*' himself couldn't have done it better." The expression represents the skill and the conscience generally exercised by the "pre-revolutionary" federal official in these same services. Now these men are down at the heel. With the teachers and the doctors they have seen the cost of living go up a thousand per cent, and the number of marks coming into their hands increased only four or five fold. The ex-army and navy officers

are even worse off. Many of these, trained from youth to be nothing else, are now apprentices learning trades at almost nothing a week! And all of these "middle classers" see themselves much worse off than the laborers who here, as elsewhere, have utilized their organization to keep up fairly close with the increased "h. c. l." For them all, too, the value of government pensions, never as great as has been advertised in America, has vanished into practical nothingness with the mark's fall.

As to the cause of it all, a local coal executive and former army officer has been willing to express freely a very thoughtful mind:

"You see, we, like every other country here in Europe, live in a very crowded room—so crowded that if one country puts its fork to its mouth, it is likely to put its elbow in some other nation's eye. Now in that room Germany has found only enemies. We could not move except to fight. Always we were forced to fight. . . .

"But as early as 1917, all the German officers knew the war was lost. With America in the war, our potential air-craft material, for instance, compared to the allies' as one to 1,000. Your Mr. Ford was making more engines in a day than we in three months.

"Our Kaiser ran away—he can never come back. Even when he was here he was always interfering with his ministers, and losing friends for us. The Crown Prince is not respected by his officers: he had too many women friends with him at Verdun."

I asked if he didn't think something like the League of Nations might have obviated war if it had been in operation in, say, 1905, and had tried to arrange more elbow-

room for Germany by, for instance, making the Rhine an international river through Holland. His answer was not reassuring:

"Perhaps. But what about Alsace-Lorraine—the country, you understand, that Louis Fourteenth took away from us, back in the seventeenth century? Of course, some day we'll have our property back again. To-day it has happened just as a French officer whom I helped to capture said it would: 'You Germans will win the war, but we will win the peace.' But France will not long win the peace. France is done. She cannot lose nearly 2,000,000 men and still be the power she has dreamed of being. Yet she is strong enough to make England now full of fear. Where England used to fear us, she now fears France."

A moment later it took an effort to keep my face straight—in spite of the seriousness, indeed of the tremolo of his voice—as he exclaimed:

"Do you know why we Germans lost the war? I will tell you. It is because we have never learned hate! . . . But now we begin. We hate France!"

"And for hoping," he added a little later; "for hoping we are now too tired—after our long effort. . . . No, none of those plans will work. The world is bad. War we must always have."

It is evidently the allies' need of coal and the treaty arrangements for getting it here as part of the reparations, that helps keep this district so busy. Every ten minutes a train of fifty ten-ton cars leaves for allied factories mostly in France. At the same time, the German herring boats up on the north coast are said to be tied

up because the supply of coal left behind is too expensive. The local representatives of the Interallied Reparations Commission are doubtless helped by the fact that for a long time the coal industry of this and other areas has been organized upon the basis of a kind of local and national trust. The purchase of supplies, the sale of product, and the operation of the shafts are handled by a *Syndikat* or federation which represents all the district's private properties and functions in close touch with the state-owned mines. These local committees have representation upon a national coal organization. That, in turn, has its representatives upon a federal committee representing every field of the entire business of the nation. Evidently that group has secured a better arrangement with the railroads than we have in America. Last evening the big station here showed the regular daily bulletin giving the district's car situation for the day: "21,172 ordered (by the coal companies); 20,270 placed; 902 lacking; 19,558 taken away." This statement is telegraphed throughout the country so that to-morrow morning anybody can judge the railroad's efficiency and the relation between demand and active, moving supply for the entire country.

Local representatives of the allies also have to attend to the destruction of war material at Krupp's. According to report, the plant managers used to write to government offices in Berlin for instructions before complying with orders. Generally that meant months and months of delay. Now a lot of contraband munitions is simply put onto the tables and there broken up at once. Naturally enough, these inspectors are not popular—some of

them feel that their very lives have been in danger. Nevertheless, the people on the street seem rather glad for a chance to talk with an "*Ausländer*."

"To America perhaps my son will go later," said a white-haired gentleman this afternoon when asked about a street and told of my nationality. "Now he comes shortly from Spain to see if perhaps a better opening is here. . . . If only we could go ahead with our trade we would still be happy—in spite of the occupation. But the sanctions—the treaty's sanctions! It is by these that the hateful French arrange to interfere with our shipment of goods, and so to stifle us. Without these we might forget the war—even though it was forced onto us by the enemies of the man who was a veritable Prince of Peace, our Kaiser."

The newspapers are probably somewhat to blame for this willingness to talk with any one who looks a bit foreign. English and other outside journals are practically unprocurable and both the local and the metropolitan dailies give very little space to international news—partly because, of course, Germany has lost her cables. But much of the space given is likely to be used by the editor to set forth the hatefulness of the French, British, or American motives behind the action or event described.

"This persecuted feeling of Germany is one of the greatest obstacles we have to fight," a worker connected with an international relief organization explained. "It is only with the greatest delicacy that we can set forth the limits of our efforts here by calling attention to the necessity for food in Russia, Armenia, and elsewhere.

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This sense of her own misery undoubtedly lessens what this country might otherwise do for herself."

"*Haben Sie gequaked?*" is said to be the present form of asking, "Have you breakfasted?" For a long time the only young people who enjoyed this luxury were those that took them out of the bowls—the "*Quaker-kessel*," as they now are called—used at the children's feeding stations. "I am Quaker" now means not a new conversion away from old faiths, but the lucky condition of having an occasional full meal, thanks to Quaker kindness.

"A great many observers come for a few days and then go away to report that all the children here look fat and healthy. But unprejudiced physicians find that these children are nevertheless anywhere from one to three years undersized."

So far, very little drunkenness has been evident, even though the wine-rooms are always crowded. Even beer is reported too expensive, following its increase of price by twenty or thirty fold over pre-war. Some say that the dreadful concoction served for beer during the conflict—when grain was too precious to permit the real thing—was a real cause of the revolution at home which, in turn, was a cause of the defeat at the front. To-day a Munich brewer advertises the full pre-war 12 per cent stuff. So at least one thing has come back to normalcy.

Last night in one of the rougher parts of the city, a big crowd watched a policeman handle a few mildly intoxicated men. The arm of the law seemed to figure that the old-time strong-arm measures would be resented, so he considerably begged the offenders to go home.



**WORKERS INSPECTING CHEAP SUITINGS OUTSIDE ONE OF THE  
SCORES OF GATES LEADING INTO THE HUGE KRUPP  
ESTABLISHMENT**



**A GROUP OF WAR ORPHANS AT ELBERFELD**  
**"Haben Sie ge-quaked?" is now good German for "Have you breakfasted?"**





Finally one of them started to run. In a flash, the policeman's dog was after him, and a moment later in front and under him, tripping and sending him sprawling with the deftness of an artist.

Essen is evidently enough the capital of Germany's war industry, and so, perhaps, unrepresentative of her post-war public opinion. Elberfeld may be much farther away psychologically than the few miles of geography. I hope to find it so to-night and to-morrow.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE WORKERS IN GERMANY'S "PITTSBURGH DISTRICT"

Elberfeld, Ruhr,  
Sunday, August 21.

THE local rapid-transit which hangs from one overhead rail just above the bed of a very serpentine little stream and at the height of factory and family window, furnishes a most delightful way of studying this busy valley city and its Sunday crowds at the zoological garden at one end of the line, and its "fans" at the football field close to the other terminal in Barmen.

Evidently this latter sport is furnishing to millions in this country an outlet for the physical energy formerly taken by the army. Undoubtedly it is to be recommended in preference to the goose-step. The great crowd had almost as much appreciation of the fine points of the game—played "soccer" style—as in England.

In the zoological garden an impressive array of men plainly dressed but with silk hats and canes included several musicians wearing opera hats. Such display probably says more about one's social position at home or office, and less about one's financial prosperity than an American is apt to think. Besides, the male here is still the kaiser of his family. The maintenance of this position requires that he shall make sure of his plumage and decoration. In line with all this outstanding emphasis upon position, one of the animal cages this after-

noon bore the sign as though the garden and the city had been honored more by the rank than by the character of the donors:

Presented  
by  
*GEH. REGIERUNGSRAT*  
(Honorary Privy Councillor)  
Dr. M—— und Frau.

But we all come by something of the same tendency at an early age.

"My dear mister, won't you please take me by myself?" called out a number of war orphans the moment my camera was pointed at their group.

Perhaps some of them are mourning a father who is not dead but who languishes in a Russian prison. This afternoon, headed by a very noisy band, a procession passed up the street bearing banners with the legend:

"Do you know that 10,000 of our brothers are still prisoners in Russia? Make the government get them back!"

The swaying car on its monorail shows the district to be given mainly to textiles and color materials and other fine chemicals. Outside of a few large plants, the factories are small, perhaps because there is hardly more room for them than for the railway itself—it was hung over the river because there was no other space. The place recalls Liège, perhaps because there, too, the hills are close upon a highly industrial city. The stores here show few, if any, of American or non-German typewriters,

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cash-registers, and machinery, while Liège was full of products of our factories.

Another difference between this country and Belgium and France is the comparative absence of black crape—outside the newspapers which abound with such heavily bordered notices as “Yesterday afternoon suddenly departed my dear husband, our good father, stepfather, and grandfather, Herr Professor K——, Doctor of Philosophy and of Engineering, etc. . . .” Religion probably has most to do with this. Perhaps also the government frowned upon crape during the war as hurtful to morale. Nevertheless, the picture which will probably stay longest in my mind is that of a German mother in heavy mourning with a high-spirited young lad in my compartment last Monday. As he sat opposite her in the train, he seemed to talk and perform with but one object in view—to make her smile from behind her thick black veil. Once he almost succeeded, but once only. She seemed to be a picture of Germany—yes, of all Europe—and all the war-torn generation over here. The boy was not born too late to feel the miseries of the war but too late fully to recognize their source.

Will the new generation over here be able to make the old one smile again—smile again and also forget—before it passes on?

“All like that they are—these children that were born during the dreadful no-potato year,” so the whisper went around among the workers on the train last night as a mother with a sickly four-year-old child that looked only two got out. “Doubtless his mother could give him no milk and the cows, too, were starved by the blockade.”



AT ELBERFELD THE ZOO AND ITS DENIZENS SHARE THE SUNDAY AFTERNOON CROWDS WITH FOOTBALL

Frontiers appear to make slight change in juvenile human nature—or adult



"At first when my man's salary as a railway official failed to go up with the cost of living, we cut off our little luxuries, you understand?" explained a woman whose face showed refinement though her clothes were those of near-poverty. "But now since long time we have been cutting off the *necessities*. And now the cost of living goes up, our salary stands still, and our marks go always down. What next we can do, I know not," and she wiped away the tears.

"We all know what you mean, madam," a little man, evidently of the teacher sort made himself spokesman of the group's sympathy, "and we think we know also the cause. These war profiteers, they know it, too. Right in our town I know a man who used to be like the rest of us and now he has his millions. How can that be?"

"Yes, how?" chorussed all the others.

"They try to tell us that the cost of living has increased only tenfold," the teacher went on. "That isn't true. Twenty-fold is nearer it. But after all, my friends, it is France that we should hate. And not because she defeated us, either. Defeated we were, yes, but by America and England, not France. If we could have a king such as England has, then we should be better off. Why should we take off our hats to our president? Isn't he an ordinary fellow like the rest of us? We might still have the Kaiser if he hadn't been so everlastingly strong with that eternal 'I' of his. It all started when he first sent Bismarck away. We'll have no more of him, that's sure. . . . Yes, it's true that we were not invaded. Perhaps we know nothing of war in spite of the great hunger of that awful blockade. But you must remember Napoleon and Louis Fourteenth—always invading us they were."



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' On all sides the most outstanding impression is one of unstable government, possible revolution—everywhere uncertainty about the future. It is the state of mind which we would doubtless know ourselves if we had to face the possibility of, say, a serious and wide-spread revolution—after seeing some of our old certainties smashed:

“When the revolution broke out in Russia we all smiled to ourselves and said: ‘No, that is impossible with us—us orderly Germans. Never will it reach here.’ And then a year later the same thing was with us. Unbelievable! And the radicals and the reactionaries have been much harder to put down than the papers say. Who knows they are down yet—that the new government can control them? And the cost of living and the mark that loses its value at a word from the great bankers—what are we coming to?”

With the republican government in power there appears to be little if any of the long-hour working-day so widely mentioned in France. Perhaps a few try to work two eight-hour turns, but not many. Here as in France and Belgium the unions are divided against themselves on lines of both religion and politics. Among the district's 530,000 miners (of a total in the country of about 1,300,000) are a dozen and more different divisions—certainly enough to try any labor manager. All things considered, including the installation of a seven-hour day in the mines, the production is considered very good—even with the leader of one of the largest unions off at Berlin in conference about a wage increase. In any and all events, this Ruhr is one of the world's prize industrial

areas. Besides having coal under the factory, the world's most tamed and industrialized river runs past the front gate. No wonder Essen, Düsseldorf, Crefeld, Solingen, and others are names that stand for far-flung lines in the field of the world's commerce. Its great lack appears to be the "white coal" of convenient water-power. Not very far away, for instance, the locks of the canal that goes toward Hamburg are operated by screws instead of water, because the canal lacks the needed flow.

What is most puzzling is how in such limited geography—with Germany, France, and Belgium together hardly more than half again as big as Texas!—there can be so huge a volume of psychology! Most of the men here are husky and many are huge as compared with the French. This is perhaps to be charged partly to Napoleon and the death-rate of his victorious (!) warriors—besides the difference of early habitat in the north for the Germans and in the south for the French. Possibly the difficulty that we Americans have in understanding Europe and her troubles is that it is practically impossible for us to conceive either the number or the wide variations of view-points and aspirations which climate, geography, and history have thus contrived to give the different peoples here—besides pushing them all together onto each other's toes and up against each other's elbows. Yet every time I cross a frontier, I get the feeling that these groups have not had anything like a genuinely close contact with each other over any great length of time. The development of a commerce which really brings them together has been of comparatively recent date. Furthermore, the difference of language serves

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not only to hold apart the foreign-born laborers in France, for instance, from the native population, but also to restrict the commercial relationships to the comparatively small number who can get either the time or the money to develop the desired facility of expression. It is, of course, the pockets into which these hills and rivers have divided the continent that have served for so many centuries to maintain these differences in language. Perhaps the recent and present amazing increase in communications of all sorts will lessen the effectiveness of these national limits and boundaries, and so gradually wear down and overcome the psychological pockets which they have caused. In that case, the change into internationalism or into, say, a more friendly form of federated nationalism, may come much more quickly than we expect, because these communications are now increasing with the speed of geometrical rather than arithmetical ratio. That speed, over here, however, encounters an enormous check at every one of these boundaries. A few days ago I wired Paris regarding mail and blithely looked for an answer that afternoon. Later they said that nothing could be expected within twenty-four hours, and yet Paris is only a few hours away—according to geography. I find to my amazement that my third-class fare from there to here is less than six dollars! No wonder the railways are losing money—even though they have not yet come back to anything like pre-war speeds and schedules.

One thing is sure. Germany is adding to the natural difficulties of these boundaries an additional wall of mental and emotional offishness. All during the years of the

war she was, naturally, cut off from any news about the rest of us. If the war was for France the "Great Mix-up," it was for Germany the "Great Isolation." Now, much as in the case of France, her feeling of self-pity makes her believe that nobody else's troubles are worth talking about. So the whole people seems to have very much the same attitude of distrust and presumption that led to her pre-war policy of friendship by compulsion, not by good-will. Few appear as yet to believe that perhaps the best way to get elbow space in the crowded room of enemies might be to try to turn these enemies into friends. In spite of her delight in "Welt-Politik," the country still appears to use logic rather than information and sympathy in coming at a practical knowledge of other peoples.

Unfortunately—also quite naturally—"the hurt that honor feels" prevents such a plan of friend-making from occurring at once to the child who has just been made to go over and stand in the corner of that same crowded room.

## CHAPTER X

### "HAIL COLUMBIA UEBER ALLES!"

Coblens,  
Tuesday morning,  
August 23.

THIS place is almost like a return ticket to the States. Our dough-boys in their neat khaki uniforms are to be seen on every side—especially, it must be said, on the sunny side of every attractive native *Fräulein*. Evidently there will be many German wives going to America before long.

"My father, you see, was a Dane," so one of the boys told about the complexity of being an American over here—or elsewhere, "from somewhere up in the Holstein part that Germany grabbed a long time ago. My mother was a Swede. We all went out to America in 1910. I can't get into the big war while it's on, you see, because I've only got my first papers. But as soon as they open up enlistments, I come over here for my two years. Believe me, I'm going to take a fine girl home with me—back to Iowa where there's the best land in the world and where I'm going to run it and run it right. . . . Yes, I had a nice girl back home, but a few months ago what does she do but turn up over here, and she not writin' to me once! 'What you doin' here?' she says. 'Well,' I says, 'you see I'm here, don't you?' I says. 'I'm married now,' she comes at me. 'Yes, and I wish you luck,'

I says . . . and I turned away. That's the kind she is. . . . But I got a better one, anyway, I'll say."

German-American treaties are evidently being written all over the place.

"Why, these girls over here," so a lieutenant later registered his international experience and judgment; "they stake you to a meal when you want it. Back in the States I had a girl—and I spent a lot of money on her, too, y'understand?—and one time she wants me to take her to the theatre and everything, and I tell her I got no money. Just that night, that was, see?—because I had \$800 in the bank all the time, but I was gettin' a little tired of always puttin' up. So I says, 'I'll be glad to go as your guest,' and what do you think she tells me?—No. She ain't got no money! And all the time she was gettin' \$175 a month on her job! So I says, 'Oh, that's it, is it?' I says. 'After all I've spent on you for two years and you hain't no money! All right,' I says, 'I'm done. I'm done!' I says. And I've never seen her since—and never mean to. I talk a little German and I'm goin' to stay here with the one I've picked out. Buyin' and sellin' things on the side—that's my line—what they call here *Schuebra*—that's German, y'understand, for war profiteer. . . . How do I pick up things to sell to Americans? Well, now, that's what I ain't tellin'. But, believe me, I'm goin' to have \$30,000 in my pocket if I can keep at it a little longer. Then you'll see my smoke, I'm tellin' you!"

It has been surprising to hear that Americans get along with the natives here better than with the French or even the British soldiers of whom a few occasionally come

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along on visits from Cologne. The explanation is doubtless that the French and British do not feel that they need to give way to the Yankees, seeing that they have all been allies on the front line. The Germans are in no position to make an argument; they must yield. Kegs or barrels get along with the rope cushions used for unloading them better than with the pavement. The cushions give under pressure; the pavement doesn't.

At the office of the Interallied High Commission, an American official tells of the street-car men's requesting an Arbitration Board for wage and similar problems. The average worker earns only forty marks after some years of service. Though these buy much more here than does forty-five cents at home, nevertheless they hardly make one happy anywhere—especially after standing a tax of 10 per cent and other deductions for accident insurance, old age pensions, etc.

"I can see no reason," the official continued, "why the Germans should not let the mark go down indefinitely. Somehow or other they manage to exist with it. Besides, they can sell more goods in foreign markets with a cheap mark than with a dearer one. About a year ago they decided to put their money back to something like its proper value. They did not raise it much, but enough to bring in from all over the world sheaves of cancellations which proceeded to close up the country's factories. Now nobody seems to know what to do. If they close many factories and produce wide-spread unemployment, they may have a revolution. It's a hard proposition."

In one of the country's most important commercial papers, 963 is given as in the index figure for the cost of

living in July as compared with pre-war—making it the dearest month of any with the possible exception of January, 1921.

"It is inconceivable," one of its editorials argues, "that any state should be willing thus by conscious inflation to plan purposely to make itself and its entire people poorer. To all who think, furthermore, it is evident that whatever value such depreciation might have is lessened by the fact that this policy—like morphine—demands constantly a larger dose in order to secure the same result."

It is plain enough that Germany is a long way from the prosperous and healthy country she has been reported. An industrial activity so manifestly built upon financial and economic poverty is hardly to be feared as permanently as many at home appear to assume. What the answer is, economically or politically, nobody appears to know.

Considering that my clothes give the idea of a good deal of a tramp, one of the important American officers here has been extremely considerate in opening his mind:

"Yes, I'm a soldier but I preach peace all the time—because I know war too well. But I'll admit such preaching is hard here in a country where a lot of fighting has been done over a long, long time. For instance, the French troops have their headquarters up at Trèves, not far from here. Well, the Romans had their headquarters at exactly the same place when they came in centuries ago. Long after that—somewhere around 843—a treaty that held for a long time was signed over at Verdun, not far away. So it goes—with old Father Time skipping across the centuries from one high spot of a war to another,



back and forth all over this whole territory. . . . Whether France with her low birth-rate, in addition to her 20,000,000 less population than the Germans, can brace up permanently enough to keep Germany off her back—that's a question. You see, they all live so close to each other over here. People don't have any trouble if they can somehow contrive to get along without any dealings with each other. It's when they have to have relations—whether they want to or not—that the situation becomes dangerous.

"Of course, the German generals did not need to lay down their arms if they did not like the terms submitted to them by General Foch there in the private car that morning in the woods up near the front," he went on when I asked his idea about "the Great Betrayal." "The Fourteen Points may have figured with the German population, but the agreement there in the car was a military, not a civil, affair. And the German army still had their weapons that morning, too.

"Many Americans have wondered why General Foch did not pursue the enemy to Berlin. To that the old warrior answers, 'I should have done so if the Germans had refused certain of the conditions laid down there in the car. To have gone farther would have cost thousands of lives: it would have been justified only if the enemy could be made to sign in Berlin terms they would not sign in France. The trouble was, accordingly, that their generals signed—and signed without delay—conditions for a truce which included every single requirement I could possibly think of there—or later in Berlin!'

"Nevertheless, I personally think the Grand Marshal

made perhaps one single mistake. He allowed the German army to retain its arms. I have noticed that whenever soldiers go back home carrying their guns, the hometown girls insist upon hanging garlands on them—if for nothing else than to lessen the sting of defeat. Before long the garlanded heroes get to thinking that they won the battle after all."

Yesterday morning the crowds of Germans in the train up north made surprisingly little comment upon the inconveniences of stopping when we entered the occupied area at Duisberg. The British Tommies, also, used the best of tact in handling the situation. Of them there and at Cologne, as of the Americans here and the Belgians farther north, there appears to be surprisingly little complaint. Here, apparently, what worries the merchants and business men most is neither the presence of our soldiers nor the lessening of business through their later possible withdrawal, but the lack of water in the Rhine! Its present level is lower than for many years—with very unhappy results on the traffic upon which the district largely depends.

## CHAPTER XI

### "MORT POUR LA FRANCE"—FRENCH UNKNOWNNS

Longwy, France,  
Tuesday night,  
August 23.

THE day has furnished a kind of railway lesson in this part of the world's past and present history. The trip here from Coblenz "over" Trèves and Thionville—in German, it is Diederhofen!—ought to be a simple matter of a few hours, so far as distance is concerned. Every phase of its actuality, however, makes it a journey into a far country. Last night an intelligent-looking woman at the Coblenz railway window—put there evidently for helping American soldiers—gave an entirely wrong "steer" about the trip, just as if it had been into a far-off land. The German time-tables, likewise, come to an abrupt stop at the last German town, furnishing no idea whatever as to what happens after that. When we reached it, we had to get out and be examined to see whether we should pay export duty upon our baggage—also whether our passports showed we had a right to leave the country. Ten minutes later we had to dismount at the first station in Alsace-Lorraine to see what import duties we should pay for entering France. Also whether our passports gave us a right to come in. At the start my fellow travellers were German:

"Some time we will even up with the French for all the dreadful things they do to us now. By us now there

are many French who do business in our country, but never would a German think of doing business in France. Never! (?) Why should they fear us so? We have no weapons, no money, no power—no anything. All is gone. . . . And life is so costly! The railway rates, they are colossal, also—and our railways they cost the government a loss of, this year, fully 10,000,000,000 of marks! That is because so much material is stolen—no, not by the French, by the railroad workers themselves. Quite true that they are not paid well, still they should not steal. Besides, there are too many of them. The government has at least two for every one job, is it not so?"

Those who took their places at Trèves spoke French a little better than German:

"All of us are loyal French here in Lorraine—except those who live near the German border. Down in Alsace—well, that's different. They speak mostly German and don't like the French so well."

A little later, the station at Thionville gave the French "feel" again—French money, French newspapers, French novels, and better-dressed women in the restaurants—and smaller French men.

Here this evening in the beginnings of the Ardennes district, this iron town is hardly an attractive place. The landlady of the inn does not appear to like my looks. She asks repeatedly whether, like most of her patrons, I am here for to-morrow's market in the main square. I can't see that I appear much dirtier than either her husband, the market farmers, or the local workers. The blast-furnaces on all sides seem to employ laborers from Italy, Spain, and various other countries. At the post-

office door, a woman asked if I wasn't looking for a workman's room and board. She was evidently as sorry to hear as I was to tell her that I could not stay long enough to get a job. Just now the bugles from the barracks have been giving what appears the characteristic sound of France, indeed, the characteristic sound, I fancy, of all Europe. At the table my French companions gave the reason for the sound in the sincerity of their fear and hopelessness:

"France?—alas, but our beloved France is finished! She can never return. War! We must somehow get rid of it. Otherwise the world, too, is finished. . . . The League of Nations—how can it be anything with no army to compel order—also with the United States outside of it? . . . Somebody must be profiting from the low value of the franc and the mark. Certainly, too, the people do not want this bothersome thing they call exchange. Why do we tolerate it—if not to please the money captains? The government, they are blockheads. Besides not knowing, they also care not. . . . Now, if we could use French coke, our situation here would be better. But we must buy it from the dreadful Germans—perhaps, though, that helps us sell them our ore and our iron. . . . Why did they attack us? What had we done? Why does America not help Europe?"

Perhaps to-morrow will make the answer look easier, though I doubt it.

Verdun,  
Wednesday, August 24.

It is amazing how hard it is to get away from the psychology of war in the midst of the practical common-places of peaceful industry.

To-night, to be sure, I am almost camping in the tumbled-down ruins of Verdun—there is little to speak of in the way of the reconstitution here. Electric lights serve in the little bedrooms, but they have not yet been put into the streets where, on all sides, the open fronts of some houses and the ruins of others stand like ghosts in the darkness.

But most of the day has been spent among the blast-furnaces, and near the iron-mines for which the Longwy district is famous. This morning at one of the larger plants to which an Italian worker directed me, the door-keeper needed no priming to talk about the subject most in his mind, and everybody else's:

"It was not so bad here as in Belgium—me, I am Belgian, you understand. There they killed nearly 300 citizens in one small village—one I used to know well. If any one, young or old, failed to answer any question quickly—zut!—with the revolver, like that—dead! A woman here—a very fine woman—has told me. Before her eyes her son was picked up—yes, like this—by the head, you understand?—given a shake and then thrown down while she looked on—dead! They are not human, I assure you! . . . And here—here we starved—for four years. Four kilogrammes, that's perhaps a few pounds, is it not? Yes, four kilos of potatoes, only, for a year! The pears and apples in our gardens—nothing for us to touch, I assure you—all for our captors. And if we went out and brought back perhaps a pound of potatoes, the soldiers took them away. Always hungry—always hungry—and yet we had to work every day.

"In October, 1918, they started away but always in their places came others. So we knew nothing. When

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finally at four one day the last was gone, we expected their friends. But at eight, the first Americans! They come and they tell us what has happened! Oh, but how they are fine, those Americans! We find beds for them. Yes, my wife and children, we sleep on the floor—so gladly! Ah, but brave lads they are! And when they go, these Americans, they pay us one hundred francs. Imagine it! We were rich!—and, besides, they leave us bread and chocolate. Yes, also some jam. Ah, but we shall never forget them!”

The company official spoke almost with tears of the new machines which had arrived just before hostilities, and which were smashed to smithereens in their boxes. All kinds of new installations had been put into operation only one month before the war, but were completely ruined before the invaders left.

“While we were rebuilding we employed Chinese, Russians, and Spaniards, as well as Moroccans and Algerians. Now we have about as many Italians as French and about half as many Belgians. While here, the invaders destroyed the upper town. Perhaps when they left they were fearful that some day they might have to pay. At any rate, they left the lower town in order—but none of the plants.”

In a near-by blast-furnace it was surprising to come upon great train-loads of coke, every car of which was marked, “Direct from Essen.”

“Five-a year in Buenos Aires—build-a beeg street. Seex-a year in Boston, help make-a da subway. Twenty-t’ree year here, and never go away except go home veesit.”

So an Italian boss gave his history while superintending the energies of other Italians and Spaniards unloading the coke into the bins from which the furnaces were charged.

The living conditions could easily cause much unhappiness. At the public wash-house in an iron-mine town, women were scrubbing lustily. In the homes an abundance of dirt was visible from the street. Wells were locked with padlocks except at certain hours. The sanitary arrangements certainly leave much to be desired. All that is only in tune with the numerous pitifully wounded blast-furnaces, their steel work on the ground, great holes in their brick walls. The marvellous thing here—as in the north—is that the inhabitants have gone as far as they have in the work of restoration. The first sign of anything more than the mildest of protests occurred this afternoon. The newspaper carried a letter signed by a body of citizens stating that they have lost all and have so far received nothing except the tiniest of barracks; that after repeated requests nothing has yet been done toward repairing the roofs of these; that unless something is done they must face the necessity this winter of sleeping in their beds under umbrellas!

Meanwhile the greater sufferings of the war-time itself are recalled by various anniversaries. Exactly seven years ago this week the district was occupied. Among 300 killed in the iron country on August 22, 1914, were the son of General Foch and the son-in-law of M. Viviani.

A local paper announces the intention of Judge Gary to visit this district in 1922, and makes the statement that his corporation and this district furnish together



84 per cent of the world's iron ore. In spite of the size of the pits seen to-day above ground and below, that sounds more like local pride than reliable information.

As we ran out of the iron country toward Verdun, only a few pennies away, the ruined houses became more numerous and miles of dilapidated trenches followed shortly after. Later as we passed the waste land where the trees stood like poles, and where every foot of the hillside had been burrowed for its mite of protection from bombardment, tears stood in the eyes of all. To-morrow favors a visit to the battle-field. Meanwhile the impression I take to bed is partly of the amazing hopefulness which can walk in upon such wastes of warfare and take up the burdens of peace. Alongside that, unfortunately, is the thought of the future wars which are in the minds of so many of those who now are busy in the works of restoration and of peace.

"There at Fashoda the English were opposed to us just as they are against us now in the Orient and in this Upper Silesia matter." So a man from Strassburg was talking in the inn. "You recall what dreadful coal we had when it came from England, yes? And with the Irish, are the English not handling the whole thing badly? Why can't they let us have all of Upper Silesia that we can get? Mon Dieu, do we not need it, if ever we are to stand up against the boche? . . . My first wife in Strassburg was French; my second, German. Do the Alsatians love France or Germany? Well . . ." (business of shaking right hand with the palm now up, now down).

What's the answer? It looks even more hopeless than last night.

P. S.—The afternoon's various changes from Longwy have furnished time to read the announcement of a 15-20 per cent freight reduction for fruits and vegetables during the month of August—in the effort for lower living costs. Evidently an advantage of the close connection between government and transportation. But at one small station, twenty-one railway workers of various degrees of importance were visible at the same time, none being engaged at the moment in anything more wearying than conversation. In this area the railroads are not directly under state control, but a traveller finds it easy to believe that national laws have been helpful to the same overmanning mentioned yesterday by the Germans.

In the compartment this afternoon, by the way, the wife of an Italian laborer and a young Italian girl from Venice who is selling small articles among the Italians in Longwy and in Luxemburg a few miles away, offered me cigarettes of such good quality that I was ashamed when my turn came to furnish my own. Evidently they and their relatives have been profiting from France's need of workers.

Verdun,  
Thursday, 25th.

The footlessness of fighting—that is the dreadful lesson furnished by a morning amid the vast hills and valleys of human and material wreckage which surround this town. No other heights in all the world constitute so vast a mortuary. For these enclose the bones of a million men! Those that "laid them down in their last sleep," in "the continuous wood where rolls the Oregon," were blessed at least with the friendly tears and reveren-

tial rites of decent burial. Here, to be sure, are rows and rows of white crosses that denote interment, but other hundreds of thousands lie where they fell—or where their pieces were blown—covered, but unburied. The reason is that they were covered too many times. The covering furnished peace and protection only until the next shell came over!

As we walked the pathways through the small forest of crosses, groups of French fathers, mothers, and sisters found their way one by one to this or that grave, where they knelt in tears as they found the sought-for name written above the words, "*Mort pour la France.*" Sadder much than these thus honored were the thousands of crosses that bore no name—merely "*Français Inconnu.*" More dreadful still, if possible, were the other thousands that bore the plural—"Français Inconnus!" Evidently a few fragments had been gathered together and given the honor of interment. Perhaps the ultimate in the way of death and burial at the post of duty is represented by those 137 bayonets which still protrude from the ground. As they stood guard in their trench, these protectors of the homes of France were overtaken with a huge mine explosion which opened the ground beneath them and then instantly closed upon them. There beneath those bayonets they watch and wait for that reveille that will sound the commencement of a war-less world.

"This is for an officer, m'sieu'. See, it is six inches deeper than the others," so one of the dozens of Moroccan grave-diggers told of his job—adding explanation of his two francs for each of nine hours and of his five-franc boarding-house. He has already been here five years.

Even during the fighting he probably did much the same work. From the way he spoke I judge he will not be glad to leave. Later I saw him and his fellows standing unconcerned while a priest in the midst of a half-dozen well-dressed people performed the last rites over a rough-board box. As the words sounded across the field, punctuation came from the explosion of a number of "duds" found just beyond the brow of the hill. The huge cloud of black smoke made it easy to believe that the battle was still going on between the nations, simply because the quarrel has not yet been settled. Almost five years of burying bodies and exploding shells—what a way of obtaining bread and bed!

In the midst of what was once an imposing fort, it seemed I was standing where my soldier friend at Douai had been entombed those four long days and nights. Surrounded by the waste of twisted steel protruding from huge blocks of concrete and the litter of discarded shoes, cartridge cases, and other paraphernalia of organized destruction, it sounded strange indeed to hear the jolly songs of a handful of soldiers quartered in the place. The same sudden shock of unexpected and unseemly life in death came throughout the day as I walked across No Man's Land or over miles of duck-boards at the bottom of trenches whose high walls were held up by interwoven twigs. In such places the silence is as heavy as though loaded with the memories of dead and dreadful doings. When you turn one of the sharp corners and a bird whirs suddenly up before you, you come back into the midst of corporeal things with a start—jumping not out of but *back into* your skin! So, too, you are almost pushed into

the putrid water of the enormous shell-holes by the suddenness with which the ghost-crowded silence is punctured by the staccato submersion of a frog! Somewhat the same shock comes also when, full of many thoughts, you rejoin a group of mourners and priests and find them discussing train schedules and politics, eating meanwhile huge cheese and pickle sandwiches!

But perhaps all that is not only unavoidable but right. Every attempt to think continuously of death in the midst of life results only in anomaly if not in absurdity. After all, there can be no such thing as life worthy the name if it concerns itself only with death. As one monument here reminds, "to be forgotten in death is twice to die." Nevertheless, it is certain that none of the dead here—or elsewhere—would care to be so fully and so reverently remembered that in their death they were living more vitally and worthily than their rememberers among the living and among the living's problems. It is only better living that can make brave death honorable and worthy. My chief complaint of one of the great religions is that, following its precepts, so large a proportion of the effort and solicitude of the living is diverted toward the attempt to improve the well-being of those who are known to have finished with life but who are believed not yet to have attained in death.

I wonder if these million dead here are going to attain what they hoped for amongst the living they left behind them. Without a doubt most of them died with "Long live my country!" on their lips in one language or another. The tragedy is that in spite of that prayer there still exist those hatreds which my last few days

have shown in the hearts of the Germans and all those fears which the past few weeks have discovered in the hearts of the French. At any rate, it would surely help to that end if somehow every American could spend a morning in the midst of these silent miles of yellow-watered shell-holes, cruel barbed-wire thickets, rotting duck-boards, and crumbling wastes of rusty steel and ruined concrete. Nothing would so help us to come closer to the fierce hatred of war which I find in all minds here and which we need ourselves in the place of our idealistic dream of the loveliness of peace—a dream that seems somehow to make us offish and inactive in our sense of security. The preachment for peace given in some of the northern towns I had thought effective enough. But Lens, for instance, simply shows destruction down to the level of the cellars. Here that stage is soon reached and forgotten.

"Right there, my friend, was the little town you named. Right there where you see those bushes." It sounded so unbelievable that we all walked over. Not even a brick was to be seen. First the houses had been brought low, then their wreckage had been completely buried—until nothing but the slate and chalk of the deep subsoil was to be found.

Surely there must be ways of building up reliable mechanisms of peace—the organized means by which groups of people called nations can secure the necessary elbow-room and save their self-respect without having always to fight for it. Certainly the self-respect of these groups is just as necessary and just as insistent as the self-respect of individuals. Its requirements change

from year to year or age to age in the same way because it depends upon our comparative status with others. Its obstacles are surely much the same as between individuals—the hurt feelings that always follow a lowered sense of our importance and value in the scheme of things.

Perhaps if more of us Americans had lived a little closer to Verdun we would to-day come closer to recognizing the need of some organization which would attempt to make bayonets less necessary—for saving people's and nation's faces in the crowded room that the new communications are making of the world. Certainly no one within a thousand miles of the tragedy of Verdun can fail to agree with Talleyrand that:

“You can do everything with bayonets—except *sit* on them.”

This part of the world, at least, is certainly weary enough to want to sit a bit on *something*!

## CHAPTER XII

### IN "THE HOT SPOT OF EUROPE"

Saarbrücken,  
Friday, August 26.

IN "the hot spot of Europe," at last! And by the right route, too. Paris, Lens, Essen, Longwy, Verdun—all these have done their part to raise this place's temperature. Also—perhaps most of all—Alsace-Lorraine, where most of yesterday afternoon was spent, much of the time toward evening in the midst of pleasant farms and husky country people who spoke French to the conductor and a German *patois* to each other.

The big steel town of Jœuf-Homecourt and others near by in France made it appear highly proper to wipe out the old boundary between them and the great iron towns of Lorraine—much as the railroads and steel plants at home blot out the State line between Pittsburgh and Youngstown. Serious unemployment has evidently not yet struck any of these centres. Evidently, too, the new officials are changing everything as rapidly as possible for making the district French instead of German. Judging from the size of the blast-furnaces, it is not strange that France has now become, next to Great Britain, the greatest iron-producing and steel-making country in Europe.

That brings new difficulties—seeing that it takes about four tons of coal to make a ton of steel. France's regular shortage of 20,000,000 tons of coal becomes all the more



serious now that she must make more than twice as much steel as before. That is the reason, undoubtedly, why France is here in the Saar as the owner and operator of mines formerly owned by the German Government, with the League of Nations charged with maintaining order for fifteen years until a plebiscite determines whether the district goes to France or to Germany or remains independent. In other words, the flooded pits visited at Lens are the direct cause of the presence here of the group of French engineers from whom I hope to get a job this afternoon at the Town Hall.

Already it looks like the world's prize problem in the field of manager and man relations. After these few weeks on both sides of the Rhine, it is impossible to imagine anything harder than for French superintendents to get coal in efficient quantities out of German mines filled with German miners! It must be hard enough amongst the part-French and part-German in Alsace-Lorraine.

"You see, the big question now," so spoke yesterday on the train through Lorraine a French priest educated in London—also in Germany during two years as a war prisoner following a surprise attack near Verdun—"is whether the clergy here will be put on the same status as the clergy in France. Here they have had no state church and, therefore, no state legislation. The *status quo* was promised by the French Government beforehand. But a big movement is trying to persuade the government to break its promise. In some parts of the country, an army officer who goes once to church is dismissed immediately.

"Money and position—not religion—these are the

causes of what is called the Marriage of Four," he continued. "All the church can do about it is like pouring water in a desert. Soon after the war started people were religious—yes, more religious than before. But it lasted too long. It was too terrible. People became—and are still—too tired to make the effort—the spiritual effort—that religion requires."

One of the last scenes in the old France yesterday was a group of housewives doing the week's washing on the bank of a little stream while husbands and sons fished near by. How the Frenchman does love to hold a pole over water! Also how he dislikes—evidently—to put water into pipes! The rest of my life I expect to be a crank about water—water-pipes and faucets. On the whole, I can think of no better indicator of a population's material comfort or its spiritual attitude toward itself—its self-respect—than its attitude toward water. That includes its point of view toward pipes and faucets, because the lack of these puts up a wall of bodily effort which seriously interferes with too free and easy a relationship with water. Come to think of it, most of my miseries during the last few years of adventuring are connected with this matter of water-supply—of comparative pipelessness. In one of my two American mine-towns, for instance, I got along very well with everybody, including the landlady—probably because we boarders had a chance at a shower-bath after the day's work "inside." In the other town everybody had to carry water and we boarders had to bathe ourselves, stripped to the waist, on the back porch or in the little kitchen. Without doubt all the dirt and discomfort which went with

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it had much to do with the ubiquitous profanity and the chronic tiredness and temper which finally contrived to put my landlady's fist in my eye. It would be safe to gamble that an improvement of at least 20 per cent could be secured in the factories and factory towns of the whole industrial world by installing nothing more imposing than some hundreds of miles of water-pipes!

And now for the cleanest collar I can muster and a rebrushing of my ancient coat—it was discarded from all standing in my wardrobe three years ago—in the effort to manifest enough respectability to support my request of the engineers for a close-up view of their bewildering problem in international industrial relations.

Saarbrücken,  
Sunday evening,  
August 28.

Good luck is certainly with me—as always. The job is mine. My German landlady has just given her promise to call me without fail at five to-morrow. My French overalls—with my time-worn and fire-tested heavy shoes and woollen socks—are all ready for a quick get-away into the mines.

“Tell the district superintendent that the slightest wish of our American visitor is to be law. Nothing of any sort whatever is to be kept from his observation nor from his closest possible contact with the workers on the basis he suggests.” So instructed the recipient of my letter after deciding to put me at work in one of the largest pits.

Have just had an enjoyable twenty-four hours with

the family of the clerk to whom the officials referred me. The establishment is a little more respectable and comfortable than could be wished, but the view-point of my host and his foremen and miner friends has already proved worth while.

This afternoon a good dozen of us walked across the Saar and into the hills till we came to a nest of villages crowded with thousands of workers and their families in full holiday regalia for the annual festival of the Kermess. The merry-go-rounds and such things were busy, but the innkeepers were much more so. In several little establishments there were no seats, even though the landlord had expanded his facilities all over the courtyard and the orchard as well as out into the narrow street. Amazing quantities of beer—and it was supposed to be of pre-war strength—were being consumed on all sides, although comparatively few seemed to be much the worse for it. All the party, however, assured me that the evidence of better—or at least, stronger—spirits would increase as the evening advances. According to my guides, everybody in the district, young and old, plans throughout the year to have his or her wardrobe in perfect condition against the coming of this particular day. They evidently do a good job of it. In no place in Germany or Belgium—or, I'd say, even in England—have I seen a working population so well dressed and prosperous-looking. My amazement at the cleanliness of the neat and often newly whitewashed homes of the miners was lessened somewhat by the explanation given for this as for many other things:

"But, you see, this is the great day of the year. Every

one here plans regularly to put everything in shape for Kermess!"

Furthermore, most of these homes, with their vine-covered porches and little plots of well-cultivated ground, are said to be owned by the miners—members of families that have worked in the same mines all during the last seventy-five or one hundred years. The French administration is now building new homes that make an extremely attractive appearance. The rent asked—fifty francs for four rooms—would not be considered dear with us, even without the free coal-supply which goes with it, but none of my miner neighbors considers it a possible price. Saving enough to buy a home, unluckily, appears practically out of the question: the sum is too prodigious—120,000 to 150,000 marks! That being so, it leaves all the more to be spent for a good time at Kermess—and my friends have come back horrified at the money evidently spent by some of their young neighbors in making a grand show. It must be a great place for any one to show off his or her new clothes because he can be absolutely certain of making all his friends sit up and take notice: from all the villages for miles around everybody is sure to be there. The hands of the young ladies are apparently universally acceptable to the frock-coated and be-caned young fellows who walk with them. Altogether, there must be something wrong with all this "dope" spread about the world concerning the unhappiness of the Saar miners condemned to work under the hated French engineers for the benefit of the hated French Government.

Everybody in my particular community—a few miles

out of the big city itself—is connected with the mines in one way or another. Judging from our group this afternoon, the population is anxious to have the good-will of America, though by no means too happy about our breaking into the party during the late unpleasantness.

"Yes, but what kind of neutrality do you call it when you keep furnishing supplies to our enemies?" one who is a mine foreman asked with a good deal of bitterness, when I tried to oppose his idea that the whole war, especially America's part of it, was fought merely for the benefit of the capitalists, and tried to explain that America had grown richer by being neutral than by taking up arms.

"It's our politics—our statesmen (sniff)—they are the people that brought you over here—and got us into all this nastiness and unhappiness. . . . And if, on top of it all, the Allies take away our raw materials in Upper Silesia, then the only thing we can do is to try to die with at least some appearance of glory—by scraping up what arms we can and trying to kill off as many of the hated French as possible before we fall."

It was only Friday that the other side of the picture was painted by one of the local French:

"So far France has not touched a franc of all the millions owed to us for all the destruction you yourself have already seen. But even if she had received every sou of it, France could never fully recover. . . . And they say that we have broken faith by asking this huge sum! They have the face to claim that the 5,000,000,000 francs we had to pay in 1870 was not indemnity but merely expenses! Then, as in 1914, they invaded and destroyed

us and we gained nothing. At that time, too, they said: 'For each 2,000,000 you pay we will recede forty kilometres.' Then, during the war, they threatened: 'We will ask 500,000,000,000 and we will hold all we have, Belgium and everything, until the last penny is paid.' And now that the tables are turned they weep. They cry, 'We cannot pay. France is cruel.' This France that I see so weakened that I can hardly imagine her ever rising again to her feet—this France is cruel and hateful! How is it possible to get on with such people?"

It was strange to listen at one moment to such testimony—and it is almost impossible to overstate the emotion that accompanies and colors it—and then, a few hours later, to be so thoroughly in the midst of the equally intense mood of the other view-point, there by the crowded tables beneath the trees of the little inn of the mining town. No wonder the district has attained its reputation as the meeting-point of the opposing currents of the European muddle. Down-town I see both French and German eating at the same tables in peace, though hardly in friendliness. But it is reported that the French children in a local private school are occasionally stoned by the native youngsters. It is hard to wait till to-morrow morning to learn whether these intense oppositions have penetrated the underground. At any rate, it will be a little simpler down there to know what to talk. Above ground—at least in Saarbrücken—you have to consider whether to use French or German. It is a tactical blunder, for instance, to use German to ask a clerk how to find the door of a French official's office—likewise, probably, to use French in speaking to a French official's

chauffeur. Indeed, it would offend my French friends if they saw I had—in deference to my landlady—dated this entry Saarbrücken instead of the French Sarrebruck.

But unless I get some sleep, I won't be able either to keep neutral or to hold up the reputation of an American shovel-wrestler!

Monday,  
August 29.

At least my experience in mining has been advanced with the help of one of the most uncomfortable jobs yet. Our vein—down about 800 feet—was hardly four feet thick—not low enough to favor hands and knees yet not high enough to permit standing up. To shovel and move about while making two sides of a right-angled triangle of one's body—never straightening up except by lying down!—gives something new in the way of discomfort. I wonder how long it would take to make a stranger as accustomed to it as my miner friends appeared. At any rate, that operation made it a joy to practise the art of taking down the coal by kneeling before the face of the seam, anchoring left elbow on the free knee and then using right arm to work the handle up and down exactly like a pump. That makes an immense difference from trying to hold the left elbow up in the air while working in the narrow berth between roof and floor and seam and timber.

The gang plan—"Kameradschaft," it's called—is evidently as general here as in France—with anywhere from ten to thirty men in the group, each interested in making sure that every one does his best. From all the day's talking and listening, the men are working hard



and are much less discontented than I had expected to find. As a matter of fact, there was comparatively little time to talk, for the cars kept coming to the end of our chute in a way to keep the whole crowd of us very busy. Several young car-pushers, representing, apparently, many parts of German-speaking Europe, had all seen more or less service at the front and agreed that, except on the very front line in times close to active fighting, they had mostly gone hungry. According to them, the average of nineteen to twenty francs per day makes the miner a better-paid worker than the district's steel laborers, but many get too bad a location to permit making anything like the average. Their chief complaint is that the benzol engines which take out the loaded cars give off a highly unpleasant gas. Otherwise, compressed air furnished power for the air-drills and also for mechanically moving the chutes—helping to furnish what look like first-rate working conditions befitting the Prussian state ownership and operation of pre-war times.

Riding in this morning for a mile and more with a German foreman, the chief impression was of the slowness of the train and of the stiff dignity of the native officials. As he sat opposite me in an empty car, one of these made an impressive picture with his high boots, his freshly laundered overalls and his heavy-looking "metre stick." This last is typical of the semimilitary authority the foreman appears to exercise here, in between a good deal of hat-tipping. Besides showing with its brass tacks the various fractions of a metre for determining whether the worker is obeying the mine regulations for inserting this or that piece of timber for the support of the roof

at the proper distances, its iron ferrule and heavy copper head make it not only a badge of authority, a useful tool and walking-stick through the dark passages, but also—according to report—an occasional aid to discipline.

According to my host, the position of these under-bosses who were turned over to the new administration with the mines, is superlatively difficult. If they remain but fail to give satisfactory service to the French, they may be discharged—to lose, of course, their pensions as German state officials. If, on the other hand, they refuse to stay here under the French, then the German Government is responsible for placing them elsewhere. That is likely to be a difficult job now that Upper Silesia's mines are in dispute, with the mines of the Ruhr well filled. According to law, however, such an official must be kept for five years at a certain salary, whether work is found or not. After that he is eligible for a pension of some value—if ever the mark "comes back." No wonder these who stay make their authority quite evident with their crisp commands.

Starting in at six o'clock means out again at one, in view of the seven-hour day now in operation. That gives a very short time for actual work with the coal—but long enough to get us all good and dirty, judging from the appearance of the crowd this afternoon at the shower-bath. The swarm of scores of naked workers there gave a wonderful demonstration of the spiritual as well as the physical possibilities of soap and water—lots of water, hot and cold. For we came in looking like grimy, black-skinned, unshaved bums. Shortly after, we emerged as white-skinned, red-cheeked gentlemen clothed in the

garments and the minds of respectability. What this means to a man's own thinking about himself as he goes through the street is a lot, but to it must be added, also, the relief it brings to all the housewives who otherwise must keep eternally trying to fight off both the dirt and the lowered self-respect their bread-winners bring home. The shower also gives a good opportunity for team-work. Having in mind here, as in the north France coal-town, the difficulty of getting at my own back, I turned to my nearest neighbor and proceeded to wash as muscular a spinal column as it has been my pleasure to see in a long time—the only difficulty being that we were so crowded that I found it a little hard to make sure that he would get the right back when my own turn came! In an amazingly short time, considering the jam, we were ready to take up again the burden of our white-collared citizenship, while our sweaty mine clothes hung from their hooks and chains in the warm air near the roof. Without doubt there is a close connection between these showers and these generally good working conditions and those clean and comfortable-looking little homes in the Kermess towns of yesterday. Me, I'm for a company shower in every mine-town in the world!—also ready to congratulate the German Government on its good sense in making it nationally compulsory.

For more than a century these pits have been operated in various parts of the locality's 700 square miles, though for most of the time on nothing like the scale of the present 70,000 miners out of the district's 700,000 population. People here believe that the local properties have never been fully developed because the Ruhr up north has al-

ways had more "pull" with the officials in Berlin. But even at that, it must cause quite a shock when so long-standing an ownership is as suddenly terminated as this has been. The shock, however, is probably much less over here than we are apt to think, seeing that various ruling houses have at different times fought—or married or inherited—their way into this locality's ownership, including at one time the Prince of Orange, and at two other periods a French sovereign. This last fact appears to have figured largely at Versailles when the French had to find ways of handling their increased resources of iron-ore with their badly crippled coal-supply. In any event the valley's long and hectic history does not appear to have hardened it perceptibly against the miseries of the recent warfare to which its nearness to Alsace-Lorraine exposed it.

"Our bread during the war, it was fit only for pigs," relates my landlord. "Our beer—nothing but water. Potatoes? Why, my wife went to some relatives away over in Bavaria—to pay a huge price and then bring back nothing but a few pounds! And flying-machines! Here in my own house, I built my family a shelter. Night after night with the explosion of the first bomb, we got us all out of our beds and quick into the cellar. Terrible! Our son of fourteen is fully a fifth under normal size—from the bad food and the big fear. And now the cost of living is higher than ever—and higher here than in Germany or France for, you see, we are cut off from them both. For potatoes that used to cost one mark twenty, we pay 120 marks—that's one hundredfold! And one says they will go still higher! No wonder our people

are unhappy, especially now that the steel plants are laying off men because their coal—in francs—is so expensive. . . . One can easily observe that our government—in Berlin, I mean—is frightened. Erzberger's murder is the eighteenth! One after another the moderate leaders are being killed off by those who want the Kaiser back, the old reactionaries who have learned nothing. Martial law has been declared in Bavaria—perhaps she will leave the Empire to-morrow. The government is afraid of the militarists even though they know that the workers and the people generally are against them. It does not know how long it will last or what will happen—and nobody else knows, also!"

From all that the past few weeks have brought, he's a highly observant and well-balanced man.

## CHAPTER XIII

### POLITICS AND POTATOES IN THE SAAR

Saar Valley,  
Tuesday, Aug. 30.

THIS "hot spot of Europe" is considerably cooler—and more contented—than expected, but the mines, at least, do their best to deserve the title. I must have lost several pounds in honest sweat there in our low-roofed "room" this morning. Luckily the rules require that, before exploding any charge, the danger be lessened by laying the dust with a hose from the near-by water-pipes. That at least furnishes a comfortable part of the hot day's work. Unluckily, when I tried to increase comfort by taking off my shirt, my companions said it was against one of the "streng verbotens," of the old Prussian régime which has not yet been abolished by the new owners.

" 'America—what of America?', many of my fellow officers in our regiment said," so an under-official explained as we went together the long mile and more to our location. " 'Nein, nein,' I told them. 'You wait. You will see!' And they did. Then, too, a great mistake it was to export the Belgians to work for us. Even the highest officers believed it was, too, but they claim their orders came from far above—doubtless from our dullest statesmen. We fought too long. Reconciliation with good-will, earlier, in, say, 1917—that would have been better. As for me I am German, yes, and loyal,

but with human beings you cannot do everything with force.

"And that is what our French officials here also believe. Capable men they are: they know how to get along with people. They study it. I will tell the truth. Good men they are—good to us and to our workers, though we officers here inside, we know that the German worker needs a firm hand over him."

Neither the local French nor the local German newspapers are willing to take quite as fair a view. All of them give more propaganda than news, the Germans evidently centring their fight on the h. c. l. The bitterness with which the men complain not about their treatment on the job but about the cause of high costs in their isolation from the Fatherland would be amusing if it were not so tragic. No one among them appears to have the slightest conception as to the whys and wherefores of it all; every one grunts uncomprehendingly when mention is made, for instance, of the condition of those water-logged entries up at Lens. In fact, few of my worker friends appear to pay attention to any kind of newspaper.

"Why should we?" asked my buddy to-day in between the exhibition of his pride as he tried to pass over to me as much as possible of his German craftsmanship. "Before the war the Kaiser never let anything into the papers he did not want. We knew nothing of the outside world. That's why it all happened. Our leaders first pushed us off by ourselves and then pushed us into the war. That's why we Communists are going to fight the next war, not nation against nation, but under dog against upper class. . . . As to this Interallied Com-

mission in charge of things here, there's nobody on it representing labor, is there? . . . Well?"

It is a long road from him and the dark, sweaty handling of coal and timber up and out through the shower-bath and into town and the office of an important German civil official who won his job by adding to a university degree considerable administrative experience and a successful civil-service examination.

"Yes, some of these miners are unhappy, but most of them feel better off now than the other workers in the region. That may be changed now that some of the steel plants are paying in francs. It is a hard problem—a hard problem politically and made still worse by religion. With many Bohemians coming in for work, added to the French near the Lorraine line, the country is now about two-thirds Catholic and one-third Protestant. This difference in religion used also to complicate relations between the Catholic miners here and the Protestant officials from Berlin. . . . If only we could have a lower cost of living, things would not be so bad. Meanwhile, we have nothing but strikes—though not for some time in the mines—and those for nothing but bread and butter. Strikes by the workers and speculation by the white-collared people—all these without thought of the cultural and spiritual things that used to interest the good old German spirit—yes, that's true even though the papers advertise for a leader of the municipal orchestra at a big salary. . . . Of course, I have faith that somehow we are going to get back, some day, to the old interests—otherwise I should feel that all I could do to merit my position would be to throw myself into the river. . . .



No, there's no chance of lessening France's power here, much as the League of Nation's High Commission of Five might desire. You see, all the individual and economic influences play into France's hands. French private capital is buying up the control in all the local steel plants. French money has been voted legal for railways and postage. And French troops, as you have seen, are all about, including those dark skins from Morocco—what you call them, niggers—though I will say there are not many and not very black. But I can't imagine that these will ever be taken away as long as they represent France and we represent Germany."

Perhaps his hopelessness is born of many such tragic games of "consequences" as that heard here lately. A French officer informed a local housewife that he was billeted with her and proposed to live comfortably. For one thing, he wished all bed and table linen changed daily. After a week she remonstrated that it was impossible—that she had already used up all her own and her neighbor's supply, besides working always at the wash-tub.

"You are quite right," was his surprising reply. "It is impossible and unnecessary. But I wished to show you for one week what your son, madam, required my mother in France to do throughout four years!"

Small wonder that the representative of the British Empire—a hardy, capable, and lovable Scotchman from Winnipeg, Canada!—finds it almost impossible to persuade the other four commissioners—from France, the Saar, Belgium, and Denmark—to forget the hatreds and fears of the war in the effort to work out the best good of the district, and, therefore, of the League of Nations

intrusted with it. Charged with responsibility for both finance and food-supply, he is reported to have found that French influence was unloading on the population excess war provisions—some of which were pretty stale and well calculated to remind the local citizens what had happened since 1914 and who was boss. Altogether his job looks like one of the hardest in the world:

“Yes, the cost of living is high here—with plenty of reason. The district raises enough food only for a few weeks in the year. We have bought all the cattle we can buy from Holland. Now we are getting some from Rumania; it takes five solid days’ travel without food or water and so with expensive loss of weight. But, you see, we simply cannot buy any kind of food except from countries with money as depreciated as ours—our selling money, namely, German. We have to buy in our best money, francs, and sell in our worst because the two moneys represent one of the compromises laid upon us by the treaty. So we stand to lose millions of marks on a single deal in potatoes or flour if the exchange fluctuates too rapidly. That’s why we still have family bread-cards—we sell so far below cost. Also why I’m glad that we closed our year with a surplus after fearing a big deficit. In spite of all that, I found the people here wanting to use flour made of only 60 per cent of the wheat for their bread. I have insisted upon their eating 80 per cent. But, in a way, I am glad to see them wanting the best and whitest bread in Europe. It shows that they are appreciating their freedom from the war indemnities or taxes which for years will be loading their neighbors over in both Germany and France. In every way our

rates here are lower than in the various war countries. But even those we have are hard to collect because a bombing-plane came over during hostilities and blew up all the official records!"

In the towns there are many evidences besides silk stockings and canes that there are worse fates than to be in the hands of the League of Nations. In the villages which dot the country, few houses but make, in the great, square stone or concrete basins outside their front doors, a good showing of the manure by which a farmer's wealth is rated—and rated accurately enough, seeing that the pile registers both the number of cattle owned and the number of acres from which income can be expected.

In both country and town, unfortunately, a sudden shift in exchange may take 10 per cent off the contents of a man's pocketbook or granary. But that is true all over Germany and various other countries. It gives a wondrous boost to speculation—the worst possible thing to do with money may be to hold it! Also a body blow to thrift just at the time it is most needed. In a way, the universality of this demoralizing perversity of exchange and of the puzzlement over it is helping toward some form of international co-operation: it makes it so evident to everybody that no one nation alone can master its disagreeable intricacies. If the League of Nations could let its experts help on that—by some concerted programme of doctoring the various national financial maladies of which the unpleasant exchange is a symptom—it would certainly go far toward helping to make it properly "The League of Peoples" such as the Germans call it—(Voelkerbund). What would help most here,

also, would be for the League to permit—or compel—the Commission to have France withdraw her soldiers and hold them in call a few miles across the border. Any payment of a Saar army is forbidden to the Commissioners by the treaty and no other country except France has thought to put one at the Commission's disposal.

Altogether it looks, tastes, and feels like as good a cross-section of the poor old world's outfit of industrial, social, and political difficulties as anybody could wish to see. And I'm sure, too, that that impression isn't simply because the day's combination of underground sweat and aboveground conversation with French, German, and English leaders has made me more than willing to call it a full day.

And now to remind the landlady of the tap on the door to-morrow at four-thirty.

Wednesday, August 31.

This being introduced to the workers as an American engineering student who has the good-will of the French officials but is not unfriendly to Germany, furnishes regularly a full day and a tiring one, in view of the active shovel-exercise needed to get the workers' confidence and conversation. To-day the pit where I worked required miles of walking through several mining villages. Unfortunately, too, the walk underground was almost as long and more muddy and slippery. The place of working, too, was low, pitched at a steep angle and generally disagreeable. The coal, also, was very hard to get out, requiring a great amount of shooting. All the workers—perhaps as one result of this—appeared con-

siderably less happy than the others encountered; for some reason, too, they did not use their heads to plan their work so well. The blisters given by my shovel, added to the short night's sleep, made their free and outspoken prophecy of the next war between muscle-men and money-men sound almost reasonable.

To-day at one time I grazed the edge of trouble by turning on so much compressed air for agitating the long iron chute for bringing the coal down into my car, that it broke the connections. Luckily, the others soon fixed it and let me continue to enjoy my pride in filling the tubs, chalking them with our gang number and pushing them to the near-by siding.

When the French engineers came along, in line with the universal French engineer's custom of visiting some part of the underground galleries every day, my buddies were pretty outspoken in their complaints about wages. It was splendid, however, to see the way the Frenchmen endeavored to explain to us all the sincerity of their interest and the difficulty of their success in fighting against the cost of living and other enemies of the worker. If there is any way out, it must surely lie in some degree, at least, through such close face-to-face and mind-to-mind contact as our group furnished as we sat there in the frame of the low, black room's darkness with our smoky lamps showing up the whites of our eyes.

In spite of the men's unhappiness, to-day brought a closer contact with the religious or near-religious spirit which these craftsmen appear to bring with them every morning to their jobs. After our miles of walk through the valley we joined the crowd standing ready with their

lighted lamps as the German mine-boss took his seat upon a small platform. As soon as everybody had reported and had acknowledged his orders for the day, hats came off and heads were bowed while a formal prayer for our safety was solemnly repeated. At its conclusion we turned to each other with a very serious greeting of "Glueck auf!" (Good luck!) Whether above ground or below, every miner greets another with this symbol of the common danger. Later I felt like repeating it as the shot-firer examined our charge of explosive and then with his electric apparatus ready, yelled with all his voice, "Der-r-r spre-n-n-gt!" (It's going off!) an instant before the explosion seemed to shake the world. At such a moment it is easy to believe for the miner, at least, that "In the handiwork of his craft is his prayer." On the whole, this morning prayer comes closer to expressing the worker's thought about his job than that other prayer which a mine-town pastor told of repeating at the funeral of his miner friend who was entombed in a disaster and whose body was found only after continuous effort during *two years!*

There's the street crier!

"Ta-ke no-tice that a new cooking class by a teacher of domestic science to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock in the company's restaurant kitchen, especially for women and girls, ge-opened will be,"—to take it as it comes. Also—"Ta-ke no-tice that Mr. Blank, undertaker, recently, everything in his establishment in order to give the best possible service for high-class funerals and reverential burying, his house in order has put." Etc., etc.

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My fellow workers tell me that during the war the undertakers here were worked too hard and teachers too little by the general scarcity of food and the over-plus of enemy bombing planes. So it is good to see the late causers and sufferers of the bombing planes getting together in the interests of better food and a longer and happier side-stepping of the grave-digger. For all this hatred and unhappiness here is a matter more of hearts than of heads, and men's hearts, as womenfolk the world over know, are often best approached through the kitchen door.

"My family and I can eat better and live better now," says one of the Germans—he is on a level higher than a miner—"because I am paid better by the French than I was by the German administration. Paid better, yes, and treated better—with less of the old Prussian bluster. I am German—and loyal German—but I try to do my duty by my employer—and to tell the truth about him."

Well, this double life is a hard one—with too much language, too much walk and work, and too little sleep. Am ashamed not to have another day as a worker, but must not refuse the offer of the engineers to take me with them on their morning trip through still another mine. Must leave Friday in order to connect with the League of Nations before my secretarial friends there get too busy with the Second Annual Assembly to talk with me.

Thursday, September 1.

It grows plainer why these miners are all working so well. If these French engineers don't become too discouraged to continue making such contacts as I've seen



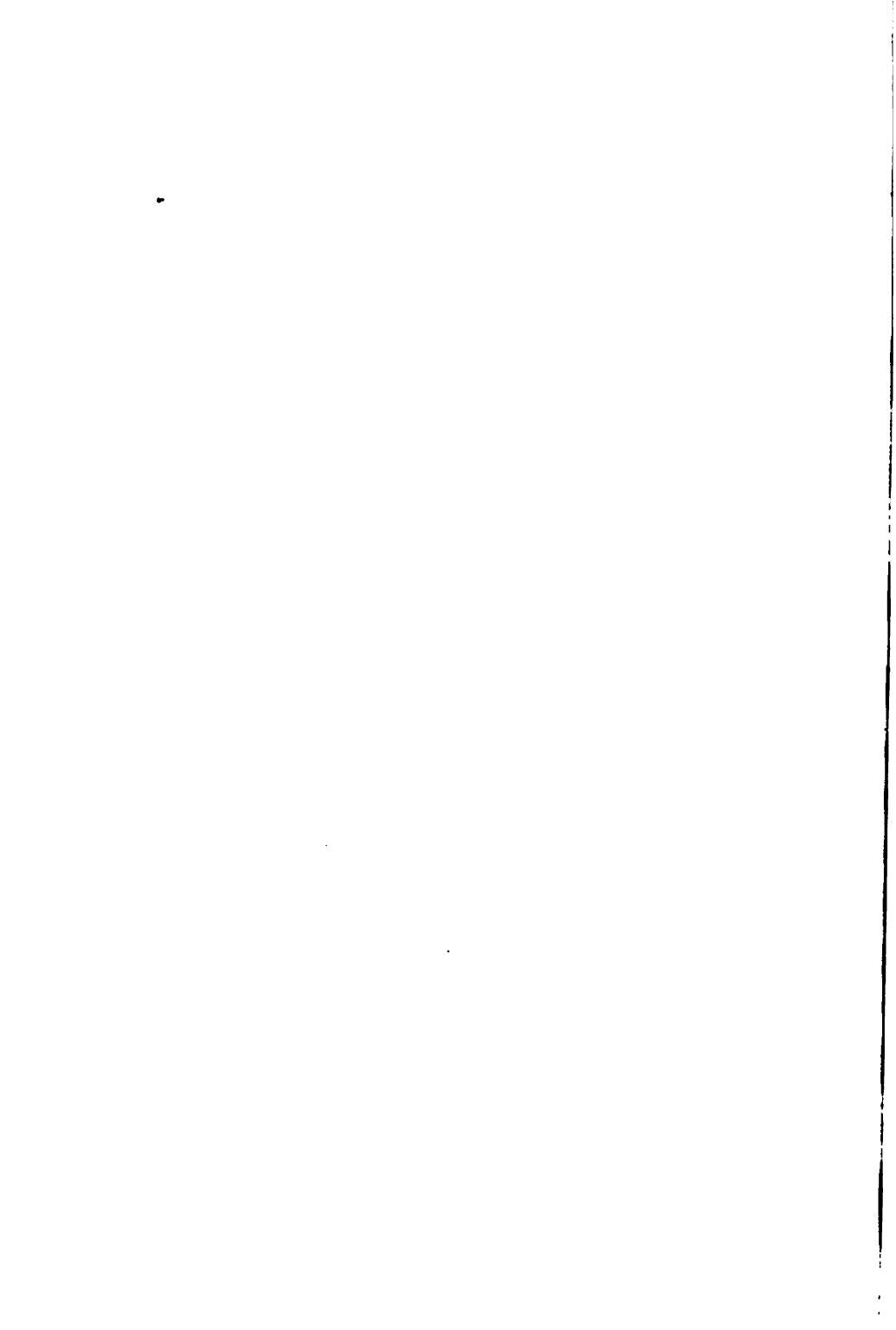
GERMAN COAL-MINERS OF THE SAAR LEAVING TOWN FOR THE SHAFT OF A COAL-MINE SEVERAL MILES IN THE COUNTRY



"THE HOT-SPOT OF EUROPE"

This name has been given the Saar by reason of the complicated political and industrial situation. The German miners shown here work directly under the supervision of the German foreman at the left. He, in turn, is under the orders of the French engineer shown with the cane. The League of Nations, in general charge of the district, may point with pride to its record in the Saar





to-day and previously, they will get these loyal Germans positively to liking them! And nothing in Europe is harder to imagine than that!

It comes mainly from this French idea whereby the big chief thinks it a part of his job to go underground for a part of every working-day—that and the real interest in the underground worker which goes with it. To-day the two chiefs certainly gave good consideration to the view-points of the men and showed their complete willingness to meet their objections; their effort was evidently all the more appreciated for being in broken German. If the men said they were earning less than 20 francs per day, the reasons were taken up with surprising seriousness. “Were they getting enough cars? How about the undercutting and the shot-firing?” etc., etc.

“Quite so,” they would reply when, as usual, the worker shrugged his shoulders as he admitted that he got good money but urged that with potatoes, meat, and all at present prices he could not buy anything with it. “Quite so, but don’t you see, my friend, that we must not blame the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker for his high prices as long as he has to pay so much for his coal? That cost is basic—it counts in every merchant’s and every manufacturer’s costs. In that cost of coal, wages alone figure most of all, with the management forced to add to that cost its ‘overhead’ for machinery, haulage, ventilation, etc., whether it gets much coal or little. If, therefore, you miners will increase your earnings by raising more coal per day, the company will be delighted to put a big daily output against that overhead, and so lower the price of coal and thus the whole

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cost of living! Now, on that basis, can we help you do better?"

Needless to say, the engineers did not forget to scrutinize the more mechanical details. A shot-firer was promised severe punishment for leaving his electric detonator lying carelessly on the floor. Another was scolded for allowing an air-hammer hose to get into leaky condition.

This afternoon in town at the central office, the head of the whole engineering group gave the French philosophy behind all this:

"Yes, undoubtedly we have a larger number of expert engineers on our operation than did the Germans, and than would either the average British or American operator. That's our standard French practice. We believe that the ordinary foreman who works underground is not capable of meeting all the underground problems, and, least of all, of managing all the difficult underground relationships. That follows from our belief—our French belief—that the mind of these workers presents just as important a part of the operation of a mine as the care and up-keep of the mechanical machines. That is true in every factory, but it is especially true in every mine, where so much of the work is done not by machine but by muscle—that is, after all, by mind. We believe our results here are indicating the rightness of our philosophy."

I know several countries that would profit from the same line of thinking, and not far from home either. Perhaps such wisdom will become more general if its success here in the Saar's coal jobs helps to give success to the League of Nation's efforts to demonstrate the pos-

sibility of a good piece of international team-work under the most difficult conditions conceivable.

The workers make it plain that they see the change from the strict, almost military, discipline of the former German régime in which the sub-bosses carried the responsibility of making most of the miners' decisions for them. As it is, even the present German under-foremen give the impression of feeling more difference between themselves and the laborers than appears between the foremen and the French engineering functionaries. These native supervisors, though, do appreciate the French idea of paying the officials a little more salary in the effort to lessen their interest in commissions from salesmen. Later on, the workers are pretty likely to appreciate, also, the French efforts to arrange classes whereby their boys will have a larger chance to become under-officials. At present, as under the old régime, no one can hope for promotion unless he passes a certain examination at fourteen. But he can't even take this unless he was lucky enough to begin a certain course of study at the age of ten. And—worst of all—he could not start this at ten unless his father had a certain standing and enjoyed a certain amount of prosperity.

In line with all this, complaints in the old days had to be made in ink. One recently received said that the writer was laying his long-standing trouble before the French even though all his earlier letters to his German bosses had never brought anything but a "good old German 'Out with you!'" In line with it, too, the daily production per man is considerably better than the outside world has understood, because the French follow the American method of including official and above-

ground workers, while the German reports figured tonnage only on the basis of "per underground worker." To-day, by the way, I saw charts which gave production and personnel figures for every year since 1816!

All this is supported, in turn, by the kind of books which I was amazed to find upon the desks of these engineers. They treat of "The Human Motor," "The Organization of Human Activities," etc., etc. Books that are found in America and England only upon the desks of the students of psychology are here found to be well-worn by the fingers and thumbs of mechanical engineers! It is, verily, worth coming a long way to see. If by all such means, here in the "hot spot," this problem of industrial relationships can be solved, then certainly there is hope for every employer in the world!

Oddly enough, all this human "complex" here appears to have one very mechanical phase. Unfortunately, this Saar coal does not make good coke. It breaks up too easily to permit it to be used in those great blast furnaces across the border in Lorraine and up near Longwy. For that reason, it now has to go clear up to supply the municipal utilities of Paris and the locomotives of a French railway—right past those furnaces that continue to get their coke "direct from Essen." So if only some one would contrive a way to make good stiff coke out of this coal, France would at once lose much of her present interest in getting her soldiers—and engineers—into the Ruhr—and one big factor in the world's present unhappiness could be cancelled. It makes a combination of politics and research worthy of these modern days.

"A formula! A formula! The thanks of kingdoms for a formula!"

A local editor may have had something like that in his head this very morning:

"Away with all this hatred. It only retards the happiness of the continent's two greatest peoples. Why not commence to buy and sell to each other, seeing that we now understand so thoroughly that reconciliation is the basis of economics, and that economic considerations are and always must be at the bottom of all constructive politics and all lasting diplomacy?"

Reasonable enough, but a harder saying than it sounds, seeing that every one of the buyers and sellers here goes around with a hand and a heart full of memories and feelings:

"If our Kaiser had mounted upon a high altar," so the keeper of the showers assured me to-day, "and there, while his people prayed, had met his death like some great German hero of old—yes, perhaps then he might come back to us. But a deserter, never did I think him that! We are done with all Hohenzollerns. . . . And never did I think that you Americans that rebelled against your British masters would follow their lies into the fight against us!"

Disappointment, fear, faith—psychology, economics, politics—who has the answer?

Friday, Sept. 2,

On train to Geneva.

The walls of these countries are certainly close together. This train down through Strassburg to Basel evidently started from Brussels. From the notices I find myself

forbidden to spit in four languages! Close together and thick! Examinations of baggage and passports, etc., out of the Saar and into the new France of Alsace, then other examinations out of Alsace and still others into Switzerland—all within less than four hours of locomotion. Naturally enough none of the moments takes one very far from the memory of the crowded room and the hampered elbows in it.

“My father wept when I went off to war, but only because I went as a German soldier—not a French. You know there were 23,000 of us did enlist with the French.” So a young Alsatian speaking French, German, and English has been telling me before getting off at Mulhouse, one of the important textile and potash centres we passed. “At Metz—in the very garrison where my father had fought against the invaders in 1870—they wanted to make me officer. I refused. A few days later they sent me over to the Russian front with hundreds of other Alsations. You see, they could not trust us. I soon walked out into ‘No Man’s Land’! The Russians failed to understand me and my wishes to surrender quickly enough to keep from bayoneting me. After I got nearly well again, I walked 700 miles back into their country. There I found 1,200 Alsations! We had all done the same thing. Finally, we were sent around by the north to England and to France. . . . Of course, my family had had no news and the Germans reported our deaths. The day this report came my mother died of the shock. But my father kept insisting: ‘I know better. I am sure of what those Prussian ways will make him do. Some day we shall see him again.’ ”

A Belgian companion adds still another facet to this hard diamond of mixed relationships—none the less illuminating for his having relieved the tedium of the long trip with a good deal of cognac:

“Yes, it is true, as our Walloon fellow citizens say, we Flemish people in Belgium are friendly with the Germans now. *Now*, you understand? During the war, no, not at all. Then we fight them, for we are Flemish—yes, but Belgians, too, and our country is at war with them. But the war is ended, is it not so? Yes. And Antwerp, now that peace has come, must have the Germans. We want the Germans back for business. Even the English do not do business with us as do the Germans. It is they who are the best business men in the world. And if they do no business, then no money comes to Belgium—or even to France and other countries. Yes, now we want to help Germany. We and all the world need her.”

Certainly these last few days show what enormous effect upon our thinking and feeling can be secured by the steady work with fair pay and good treatment brought by business. If to these could be added a lessening of the fear of high living costs, the Saar miners might amaze Europe with their industrious patience—possibly, also, with their votes for an independent Saar in the plebiscite at the end of the fifteen-year period. I feel sure the Saar's h. c. l. is not so far above Germany's as the Saar miners' wages are above the wages of the Ruhr. So I have suggested to the proper authorities that the Saar government arrange to add to its plans for a commission on the cost of living, the effort to make currently and continu-



ously a scientific and unbiassed study of local living costs as compared with similar figures for Germany and France, making public announcement of its findings from month to month. Such a report would have a hard fight against the propaganda of such conversation as assailed me every day, but would in time get such a hearing for the actual situation as I am sure it deserves—especially if, as proposed, the commission includes representatives from the miners themselves as well as from their native and French officials.

Looking back on all the conversations to which it has been my business to listen during the past three years, it is fairly safe to say that more breath has been devoted to the price of potatoes—potatoes and bread—than to any other single subject. The getting or the gripping of the job might perhaps be excepted, but even this has been given larger importance by the price—the increased price—of potatoes and bread. It is nothing short of amazing what a lot of trouble can be caused in our feeling and thinking by the sense of unhappiness connected with potatoes and bread. Whether this unhappiness is actually justified by the facts appears to have little to do with it. On the whole, I would say that both the politicians and the philosophers have failed to give the humble potato its proper recognition as one of the most important factors in the organized life of Christendom. In any event, the greatest cause of difficulty found in the “hot spot” comes down to the fact that the potato, whether it actually is too high or not, *feels* too high. In a lesser degree, the same holds for most of Europe and America.

I wonder whether the "S. d. N.," as the French papers indicate their acceptance of the Society of Nations as an established affair, will to-morrow give indications of carrying anything like a proper potato philosophy on its political mind.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE "HALL OF THE REFORMATION"

Chamonix, France,  
Saturday, Sept. 10.

"Just what I expected—or feared," I said to myself last Saturday afternoon after I had started off to find my friends at the office of the League, and was following the pointings of the motorman toward what looked like a sizable but extremely stand-offish and aristocratic establishment, set like a private residence in the middle of a great lawn and inside a high iron fence. All the gates were imposing enough but, unfortunately, quite securely locked. Around the entire block and still no kind of Saturday afternoon back door. As likely as not my American friends were among the group enjoying their English week-end in a beautifully shaded tennis-court just outside the unbusinesslike office-building of the organized world. The farther I walked, the more typical it all appeared of the whole European temperament and situation that the offices of the great League of Nations should shut themselves off in such aristocratic and inactive dignity right on the eve of its Second Annual Assembly, composed of four representatives from almost every nation in the world.

Finally, in considerable disgust, I asked a passer-by if he could tell me how one could enter the Society's sanctum of a Saturday afternoon.

"But yes, monsieur," and he gave a great shrug; "and it should not be difficult. Right there!"

On the instant I began to arrive at a new appreciation of the League of Nations. There just across the street from the block I had been encircling stood a great five or six story building. At the gate and in the courtyard was a hurrying, chug-chugging, door-slamming, order-giving mêlée and procession of magnificent limousines, hard-working jitneys, nervous motor-cycles, uniformed chauffeurs and messenger-boys, in addition to scores of silk-hatted statesmen and handsome, Paris-gowned women from various parts of Europe and South America mixed with dignified gentlemen wearing fezes from Persia and turbans from India! In the lobby several clerks at a great desk somewhat like a New York hotel's, were trying more or less vainly to keep cool while telephoning, and at the same time answering the queries of the jam of people who appeared to use a bewildering variety of languages. Exceptionally active and intelligent-looking young men and women, evidently a part of the working staff or secretariat, were carrying papers in and out of rooms where a number of international committee meetings were in progress. This busy, throbbing aggregation of serious-purposed people—had all this been got into such vitality and vividness of action within these months?

It was one of the greatest surprises of my life—and certainly, after Douai, Lens, Essen, Saarbrücken—one of the most agreeable!

That initial impression of down-to-brass-tacks, straight-ahead aim and action has been upheld by every session since—in spite of the puzzlement over the Washington

Conference. The opening address of the acting president, the young Wellington Koo, Chinese ambassador at London, showed his eleven years in America. It was merely a common-sense statement of the gains already made in the establishment of the International Court of Justice and otherwise, and of the great tasks ahead. It was no oratorical effort to attract world-wide attention nor to pull down the stars and let their glory shine for the lighting of a new earth under an old heaven. No French or Latin-American statesman would have missed the opportunity to open the party in that way. And when he had finished, everybody would have said "Wonderful! Marvellous!—but—er—where do we go from here?"

Still the scene in the great Hall of the Reformation certainly does somehow cause the heart to beat rapidly and the eyes to fill. Below you sit at their appointed tables the carefully chosen representatives of forty-two out of the forty-eight sovereign states now actively taking a chance at the world's newest and hugest experiment in good-will and universal betterment. Evidently, furthermore, these nations are determined to play this chance with all possible energy and thoughtfulness; they have sent their best men to sit there at those tables—their best in every sense of the word. Beside Arthur Balfour is Mr. Fisher, Britain's Commissioner of Education. Viviani and Leon Bourgeois sit with their less famous colleagues for France; Ex-president Matta with his friends for the Swiss republic. Professor Gilbert Murray of Oxford is with the African delegation. In all, thirteen university professors and several women are mixed with

various prime ministers—together as intelligent-looking and high-minded a group as could be gathered together. Certainly, too, the most cosmopolitan the world has ever seen. There, alongside Sir Edward Meyer, representing India, is a great black-bearded philosopher of a man with an imposing turban on his mass of gray-black hair. When he stands up you can see his long silk coat with just a glimpse of madras-silky and close-wrapped brown trousers showing above his patent-leathers. (From the way he walks it's safe to assume they're brand-new.) And all these "nationals" mixed up together splendidly! The British Empire's table is surrounded by Australia, Argentine, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Brazil, and Austria!

This same impression of democratic cosmopolitanism comes in the lobby before the bell rings. Everybody seems to talk with everybody else. That is one big gain now that the delegates meet again after having made each other's acquaintance a year ago. It looks immensely more like a league of peoples for furthering "open covenants, openly arrived at," than I expected. In fact, there's much comment that Germany, though not admitted to membership, has already joined a number of others in registering publicly with the League all the treaties she has entered into.

Yes, as compared with, say, that sombre office-building at Krupp's, this room seems to offer immensely more elbow room—more than any I've seen in Europe. Its most obvious restriction appears to be that of language.

Luckily one of the best talkers at the Convention is the chief interpreter, a French professor. The newly

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elected president, Mr. Karnebeek of Holland, scarcely finishes his address in French before the professor, with a better voice than most of the speakers, puts it into excellent English, even including the gestures. The Persian representative who talked in alleged and very jerky French almost floored the interpretive staff, but two or three of them took turns in expressing the gentleman's enthusiastic surprise that, thanks evidently to the Great War, civilization was seeing the realization of its dream of "the Parliament of Man, the federation of the world!" One of the representatives of Chile was sufficiently accomplished and polite to make his remarks first in English and then in French. It is easy to sympathize with the school authorities of Geneva, who have substituted for the old German, courses in the attempted universal tongue, Esperanto. That would be useful to any Swiss. On the train last week a resident of Neufchâtel advised, when we were leaving Basel:

"We will do better to talk German until we get nearer French Switzerland. Then it will be a pleasure to talk our beloved tongue."

At the assembly, as everywhere in Europe, the outstanding thing is the amazing progress English has made toward becoming the universal language of business and, therefore, of politics. The French are quite properly alarmed. Yet hardly a paragraph in French newspapers to-day but shows the breadth and depth of the English penetration by means of such words as "coming man," "right man in right place," "interview," "meeting," "football," etc., etc. Such leaders as Benes, the prime minister of Czecho-Slovakia, appear to represent the Eng-

lish instead of the French type and attitude. As a matter of fact, talking with him gives the impression of talking with the president of the local—and live-wire—Rotary Club! From the free discussion given his local or regional league in the form of the Little Entente, there is evidently no feeling that the big League Covenant is beyond modification or amendment.

In the whole room the most interested participant—the one who goes and stands near the platform when he can't hear or, with his delegation's vote in his hand, awaits his turn at the foot of the stairs—is, next to his chief, the world's most famous statesman, Balfour. He is said to have come lately to a complete faith in the more idealistic and democratic conception of the Society as represented at all times, on the platform and off, by his colleague, Lord Robert Cecil. In line with the big boyishness which shines from his large face and frame, Lord Robert opposes the French wish for an armed league, and insists that the appeal of this organization must be to the peoples of the world; the rightness of its decisions as approved by their good sense rather than upheld by bayonets, must be its justification and its strength.

One day, before the assembly, he gave a very frank scolding to the representatives from Lithuania and Poland:

"By their failure to compose their differences like gentlemen, they are to-day imperilling the peace of the entire world."

As the applause came from all quarters, the public opinion of the civilized and organized globe appeared to be suddenly concentrated there in the room—concen-



trated and directed toward the two tables where it could do the most good. Such a concentration on such a scale and between representatives who came together not as strangers but as acquaintances—such has never before been seen in history. If getting together in the same room so often simplifies the capital-and-labor problem in a great factory, surely such a yearly meeting—or something like it—must be looked to for realizing all the prayers of the war-worn and war-sick workers over here and at home. Especially when these annual gatherings are aided by a permanent year-round group of secretaries chosen from all parts of the world and busied with the continuous collection of facts and view-points needed for placing—in the two official languages—this problem or that properly before the diplomats. Already the mail coming to the new offices contains the prayers of an astonishing variety of the world's unhappy peoples, as if it were some great super-philanthropist. Already, too, many of the makers of these prayers are disappointed with results—having failed to realize that the League is not so much a new organization as merely a new—and tentative—*method* by which the existing governmental organizations are now endeavoring to operate in certain fields of activity. In attempting to make the co-operation an affair of opinion and not of arms, the temporary disappointment of the world's masses was made unavoidable because it represented a definite, conscious choice of the simple, slow, and democratic, rather than the imposing, sudden, and autocratic method—the Anglo-Saxon rather than the Prussian, the method of “Main Street” rather than of Potsdam. The difference between the two is

the same as in the famous comparison once made by a distinguished British statesman:

"Monarchy is like a great ship. In all the pomp and panoply of power it rides the waves with all sails set—until it strikes a rock. Then it goes down forever. Democracy is like a raft. You can't sink the thing but, damn it, your feet are always in the water!"

The International Labor Bureau indicates the effort to prevent the commercial competition of the politically co-operating members from becoming merely a contest as to which nation can get its workers to stand for the lowest scale of living. As such it should be most useful to the nation whose workers already enjoy the highest standard—ourselves. To date, for instance, our absence from it has prevented the European powers from making universally compulsory some of the advantages on ship-board which we have already made compulsory for ourselves. Its organization appears perfectly natural—indeed completely indispensable—to any kind of effective world organization, considering that the summer's friends among the workers have all shown how thoroughly and inexorably the pressure of the crowded room pushes into one inseparable ball over here the threads of foreign policy, internal politics, domestic industry, and, finally, family bread and butter. At any time the passing of a law in some country a frontier or two away may cut off 10,000 laborers' families from their means of livelihood. The least—and the most, probably—that can be done is to attempt agreement that such laws shall not cause hurt to the workers of *both* nations.

"The new internationalists," according to Albert

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Thomas, the bureau's secretary and formerly a distinguished French labor leader and minister of munitions, "agree largely with your Krupp friend as to the 'self-determination of raw materials.' They would lessen this cause of international friction, not by having all the peoples lose their individuality, but by arranging some feasible plan of so apportioning nature's bounties as to place the different units on a more nearly even basis of competition. That, they claim, would still leave plenty of room for the present differences in production or selling abilities. As to the feasible plan of apportionment, they are, of course, far from agreement."

| Even the Swiss have seen this pressure of raw materials—the other nation's raw materials—upon their domestic life. During the war they had to part with much of their live food because the Germans would not sell them—at a colossal price—the coal needed for their state railways except in return for the privilege of buying cattle. As a result, the Swiss Government is borrowing money at 8 per cent for paying the hundreds of workers now constructing a hydro-electric plant in the heart of the Alps for keeping the trains moving when her neighbors get to fighting again.

That is typical of the way peace-loving and peace-preserving Switzerland pays the price of the difficulties of its neighbors. Just because its own currency has not depreciated, the usual pre-war visitors from France and Germany can now not afford to come—or to buy goods. Much unemployment is reported in the watch, textile, machine, and other factories. So in one of its big cities—in spite of what look like handsome factories in the midst

of delightful though simple villages—a great convention has brought together the country's Communists! Switzerland, joblessness, and Communists! What are we coming to?

No, it's not surprising that both the statesmen and the workers of this crowded continent have gone even farther than their fellows in England—and enormously farther than their confrères in America—in understanding the tie-up between their 'cross-frontier relations and their 'cross-table rations. That, rather than the negative hatred of war or the positive dream of peace, is pretty surely the force behind that inspiring room well named "of the Reformation" up at Geneva. And the certainty of the development, in time, of something like that same understanding at home will not fail to mean an enlarged American interest in all such meetings on the part not simply of the leaders of our international labor-unions as at present, but of our employers and producers as well.

*Later.*—Speaking of 'cross-table rations, I took dinner lately in a very grand dining-car. The wife of my French neighbor gave me a distressingly careful look-over and evidently asked him who let so uncouth a person into the party, for I heard him explain that my clothes showed me to be one of the railroad's employees, so I was doubtless getting my meal at reduced rates! The same difficulty, incidentally, somewhat lessened my contact with the League. If "it takes nine tailors to make a man," it requires a free use of the multiplication table to figure how many were called upon to put the Second Assembly into the hall. So it has proved distinctly embarrassing,

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in addition to being enjoyable, for me to lunch and dine, in my old clothes, with some of the meeting's leaders, titled and untitled. But perhaps that is only one more sign of their surprisingly democratic spirit! Anyway, it is this spirit as much as anything else which has made me feel that that group of men is going increasingly to be looked upon as the hope of the world. Their organization is certainly far from perfect—but—well, if we know a better 'ole in which to protect the war-worn peoples from the explosions of the present situation, we'd better go to it—or else help the others dig it!

P. S.—Just to remind us how all countries everywhere are running into much the same difficulties in the wake of the all-countries war, the morning paper tells how “a family of ten who have been ejected from one house and unable to find another, have lately camped out on the highway between Versailles and Paris. Inasmuch as they interrupted traffic, the authorities of the district have decided that the military authorities shall construct a shelter for them.”

St. Etienne,  
South Central France,  
September 14.

“Since the armistice 80 per cent of this district's workers have been discharged, simply because it is to the profit of the employers temporarily to suspend operations. It will be a misfortune to allow these factories with their expensive tools and modern equipment to become the prey of private firms operating them for their sole profit. The government should retain them so that the workers may retain their means of livelihood. Op-

pose with all your strength these machinations of your enemies!"

Other evidences besides this flaming poster on the town hall indicate much the same restlessness in this old industrial centre as was apparent in the hardworking suburbs of St. Ouen and St. Denis. Naturally enough, the three places are just about equally dirty. It grows more and more evident that a careful observer could make a fair guess at the state of a working population's mind by simply getting what the statisticians call the "index number" of inside and outside faucets to the block. Doubtless the absence of water in this city of well over 150,000 is in line with the closeness to agricultural simplicity indicated by the number of ox-carts slowly going through the main streets. That same nearness doubtless also furnishes a safety-valve for the radicals. The same impression of an old, easy-going industry and commerce came in the post-office this morning when a man rushed up to the telephone girl asking immediate connection with a business house near by. When he was assured that he would have to wait for a half-hour before he could be given the line, he replied with heat:

"Very well, then. I'll go 'round and see them first and be back by the time you're ready!"

This same impression, indeed, comes in every French post-office. The chief concern seems to be to make certain of the maximum security of age rather than to enjoy the maximum opportunity of youth—to emphasize the prime desirability and importance of playing safe. The ordinary citizen seldom uses a check and appears to feel that the banks here are only for the rich—altogether a

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far cry from our American belief that at the bottom of every worker's dinner-pail, like the baton at the bottom of the knap-sack of every soldier of Napoleon, lies a check-book. If more of these postal-savings depositors were in the banks, keen to make their francs do heavier work even though at greater risk, there would hardly fail to be a larger chance for these men and women to get out of the grooves into which their lives appear early to settle.

Many of these grooves, it must be said, however, have their charm. To-day at lunch in as good a restaurant as my costume would permit, I noticed a man of outstanding appearance; with his broad-brimmed hat, flowing beard, intellectual face and cutaway coat, he could well have been the director of the local conservatory at least, if not president of the departmental university. A moment later he sounded a note upon his private tuning-fork and launched into a song of moving romance and fine feeling. Shortly thereafter we had the opportunity to put our centimes and francs into that magnificent chapeau! Unfortunately the tumble-down condition of some of the local factories, suggest some connection with the ancient days of the troubadours. In several quarters, however, are some of the newer machinery establishments bearing names internationally known.

The commercial capital of this country at Lyons supports the general impression of moving in one industrial groove "since long time." Yesterday the walk up its historic hill brought close contact with numberless stone reminders of the old Roman times when the place served its district as completely as to-day and for much the same reason in its position at the confluence of the Rhone

and Saône. The capital of Gaul becomes the second city of France. Its local silk culture is reported languishing because the present-day youngsters dislike the extremely painstaking care which the silkworm requires. The weaving industry finds it difficult to induce the younger generation to work the old hand looms alongside their fathers or grandfathers spending their fiftieth year or more on exactly the one machine in the one factory which has provided their life's job. One of these men, over ninety, continues to weave less than a metre of silken fabric a week. But that metre is probably worth seeing. Undoubtedly the old man could teach my miner friends something about "habit—habit and custom, m'sieu'." Pretty surely, also, about that patience and imperturbability which is behind the national gesture of shoulder-shrugging. When expressed in words, it takes the form of:

"Ça m'est égal!" "It's all the same to me—what's the difference?"

The combination of these two national acceptances of grooves is perhaps the reason why conservative tradition is said to hold so strongly in so large an industrial centre as Lyons—also why so great a city remains to-day without sewers. That, of course, accounts for the scarcity of faucets. That, in turn, according, at least, to the dictum of a noted German philosopher, accounts for the development of perfumery; socially, its use is fairly comparable to that of the grease on that pump at Lens.

In line with this French talent for accomplishing large results with slender resources of every sort, an American in Lyons told me how he had done some fine figuring to



prove to his truck-gardener that the purchase of a flivver delivery wagon would be a profitable investment as compared with his slow and always hungry horse. The gardener looked over the figures carefully and then handed them back with a gesture of finality:

"But you have failed to add all the money I should have to pay for fertilizer!"

It would be proper to assume that France has long been living an altogether simple, easy-going, and altogether happy life in this ability to make much out of little, except for one thing which can never be forgotten in connection with modern France.

"Here is what happened here in France at various intervals between 1870 and 1914," this American went on yesterday. "Suppose you were a French citizen of the type I know in great numbers. You would go to your contractor and say, 'Monsieur, my wife and I—we have agreed that we are now ready to build our home. On Thursday morning at nine we shall be here, she and I, to make a small payment and sign the contract. You will have workers ready to begin, yes?' But the next morning you would pick up a paper and there would be the head-line, '*An Incident—A Grave Incident Happened Yesterday on the Frontier.*' It would proceed to tell how Captain So-and-so of the French army happened to encounter Captain This-or-that of the German army in some little restaurant close to the line, the conversation ending in one of them emptying his glass of wine or beer in the other's face. Merely an incident! But quite enough to make it necessary for you to go to your contractor and, with a shrug of your shoulders, say: 'You

have seen the papers, yes? . . . I am very sorry. We must wait.' And quite enough to make the contractor, with a similar shrug and a turning of his hands, like this, throw the contract into the fire. At such a time everybody knew that all the men of the country might perhaps be called out before next Monday to protect the homes already built without bothering about building others. Think of living under such conditions year after year, decade after decade! Of course, they affected not only the contractor but the manufacturer, storekeeper, tailor—everybody from the top down to the least skilled laborer. And now that France has no guarantee from any nation that they will help her, exactly the same thing is continuing. No wonder they try to be as contented as they can under the shadow of such a fear. In fact they are fearful of their happiness when they make bold to master their fear! Only a few days ago one of my friends here gave me his version of the war like this:

" 'You see, we French—we were too happy. We had our homes, our little businesses, our families, our pensions against the future, our glass of wine and our good food. Why should we trouble to protect ourselves? We were too happy—and they found us sleeping!' "

The high price of vegetables and the vigor of a local wife who ran away last week from her husband who drank twenty-five bottles of beer daily, were the subjects of discussion when I left the group down-stairs here in the little inn. The unsatisfactoriness of government was also duly considered, in line with the evening paper's comment:

"During three years M. B—— has been pressing his

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claim, with as yet nothing of reimbursement for damages caused by an explosion of government material. These delays were caused by certain errors on the part of the clerks in making the records. The judges now find excuse for further delay by discovering again these same errors which led to the first delay. So it goes year after year!"

St. Etienne,  
Thursday, Sept. 15.

To-day's visit underground reconciles me to my inability to stop for a miner's job.

The vein, 2,000 feet down, is unique in possessing at some points the amazing thickness of nearly thirty feet. If it were not limited in extent, such a deposit could keep the whole country in coal though it might denude the forests to supply the huge amount of timber required. But it is only too evident that the operation is on a very narrow margin. In every way the working conditions appeared much older and less desirable than those in the north. Most astonishing of all was to find certain quarters so little ventilated that the heat was as much as ninety-three degrees Fahrenheit! It gave an uncanny sensation to walk through the passages and come suddenly upon workers standing before their seams, shovel or pick in hand, stark naked! Neither that nor the heat, however, appeared to offset the force of that "habitude" which pushed them toward the usual energetic and unceasing labor. I asked one of them if the narrow, twisted ribbon around his waist was for holding his lantern while pushing the coal tub—even though personally I should have preferred to hang the lantern on the tub or in my

teeth. My miner friend had evidently the same preference:

"But no, m'sieu'. It is to hold one's belly!"

In addition, the mines are evidently quite gassy. In each district numerous additional lamps are lighted and taken down every morning wherewith to replace those that go out: it is considered too dangerous to use the style we had up north which can—with some danger—be relighted underground.

Altogether I am just as happy to be above ground to-night with no plan for descending as a worker to-morrow.

"Me leive (live) here one year for be student—mak' my praktik study. Three months more be engineer certificate." So a young man this morning explained the method of the mining schools for which the district is noted. It appears that certain great disasters in this region, a generation or so ago, demonstrated to these schools the vital necessity of closer daily contact between the chief technical officials and the workers and their working conditions. So it proves to be the humble annals of this little-known district that are now playing their part in making international history up in the Saar!

It is this district, also, which helps to give the answer to that query of the days in the north—How could France "carry on" so amazingly in spite of the enemy's holding her "Pittsburgh district"? One of many expedients was to come down here and stage, as it were, a hurried come-back of this industrial centre of the older France. Even in the newer industry of ribbon-making, what looked like well-lighted plants proved to be only the shipping-rooms for ribbons actually made mostly in the

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workers' homes. That is probably here, as elsewhere, a sign of bad working conditions, though there was no time to make inspection.

"M'sieu' Tom" was rightly informed: These people are less cleanly, self-respecting, and happy than their friends in Douai. The ubiquitous street markets indicate pressure for the utmost cheapness. Wooden shoes are the usual thing. The number of men with amazingly dirty beards and altogether the look of what we would call bums bespeaks considerable alcoholism. Saturday night would pretty surely confirm the general report of wide-spread drunkenness. In the worst quarter of all, many foreign laborers live in evident discomfort—including a number of Spaniards and Chinese. It is almost too bad that the Germans could not have sent a few bombs here. Then the district might compete better with some of those new and up-to-date plants which now dot the north—particularly with the help of the power which can be shipped here from the great hydro-electric establishments over in Grenoble in a manner to compete with coal! According to a current journal, one of the group of British steel men that recently visited this region was told by a proud employer that a certain building had lasted for seventy-five years. He could not forbear the pleasure of making the interpreter inquire:

"How long would it take you to tear it down and put up a better one?"

My own mood of depression caused by all this was echoed by the head of a local miners' union:

"No, we do not get much into politics here—or, for that matter, into anything outside our work. For the

present we have all we can do to keep the employers from pushing wages still farther below the means of life. And how can one live already? Do you know what potatoes cost here? And wine!—la, la! Well! . . . Yes, they call us into conference and so, in a sense, recognize us, but all the conference is for is to tell us that they, in their power, have decided upon another decrease. With jobs getting scarce throughout the country, what can we do?" (Business of very wry face and highly active shoulders.) ". . . No, there are not many Communists, but Socialists—of these is every one. . . . Jouhaux and his C. G. T? . . . Yes, he's a marvellous orator, but—well, for them as for us all, the employer is too strongly united. . . . Of course, the French engineers visit the pits daily but only to push the workers for more production. They have little interest in us workers as workers."

With wages of unskilled labor as low as twelve francs, narrow sheets evidently are pretty nearly universal for the town's working population, organized or unorganized. In some of even the best homes here, too, there are probably a number of maids who wish for some undiscouraged union leader to fight for them—against the national habitude that urges, at every level, to the cutting of narrow sheets and close corners. A French friend tells of one well-to-do native householder who has kept the same servant year after year, not only on a meagre salary but also—and the situation forms a part of the regular gossip among her friends—in constant need of enough to eat! Such a possibility can be understood only after seeing the French housekeeper start the morning's cooking by taking her great key, unlocking the cupboard, laying out

exactly the proper amount of eggs, flour, bread, sugar, butter, and salt, and then relocking everything before she leaves the maid to her day's performance. The strange thing—and the characteristic—is that this particular maid, so the gossip runs, continues loyally to stick by her elderly and careful mistress. For one thing, she obtains a small pension from the local welfare department; for another, she is afraid that her patroness, known as she is throughout the town for her closeness, might not be able to get another servant!

The discouragement of the union official increases my wonderment whether the French labor movement does not owe its present below-par condition partly to its emphasis upon oratory—perhaps even its normal enjoyment of about one-tenth the influence of the British movement. It ought not necessarily to raise any presumption against the strategy or brains of M. Jouhaux that he is one of the country's best speakers: our American labor leaders are also orators and amazingly able presiding officers. But they apparently plan to do more of their work with the employers, and they are less advertised than are the leaders here for "giving the word" at this mass-meeting or that. Although we in America have developed the luncheon or the evening meeting far beyond any other country of the world, nevertheless, we do not give anything like the same importance to the trained user of words and the expert arouser of emotions. It would hardly be too much to say that not only French labor but France in general is ruled by its orators.

I wonder whether that in turn is not in part the result of the earlier mentioned scarcity of newspaper facts—of

the French emphasis upon views rather than news. Certainly this plays into the hands of these "givers of words." In any event, it is refreshing to see just now that Leon Bourgeois is using his oratory over at Geneva, along with Lord Robert Cecil's, in an appeal for a wide-spread newspaper and general publicity programme in favor of the League. Incidentally, M. Bourgeois and his colleague M. Viviani, France's greatest speakers, are members of the Union of Intellectual Workers.

It is to be noted, however, that even the streets here endeavor to make up for the shortcomings of the local papers. Throughout the length of one thoroughfare to-day I noticed the legend:

STREET OF MICHEL RONDET, FOUNDER OF THE UNION OF THE  
MINERS OF THE LOIRE, BORN 1841, DIED 1908

Who knows but that our own labor problem might be advanced if we were willing thus to give publicity to the founder of a genuinely public-spirited and well-managed union?

Not far away is "President Wilson Street." It is perhaps a little less popular now that his supposed constituency has so far deserted him. But to date there has been no unfriendliness shown me as an American of the working class except that no one over here is able quite to understand us.

P. S.—"At Roubaix-Turcoing," so the evening paper reports, "the various groups of general strikers now include the municipal employees who make the daily examination at the custom-house gates of the city. They exhibit their dissatisfaction in a peculiar manner. They



present themselves without their uniforms before their offices at the ordinary hours. These offices, however, remain closed and the inactive officials content themselves with instructing the public to pass their declarations of taxable merchandise under the office door! . . . Four employees connected with the funeral services have been authorized by their colleagues in the general strike to continue with their work. The bodies, however, will not be interred except in the temporary vault which holds a very limited number."

In the same despatch, Mr. Jouhaux is quoted as believing that the trouble is caused by the "patrons," who will not see anything but their private interests. "What is needed is a reformation of the entire system of production based upon co-operation and not competition among the nations."

A near-by column gives the news that in view of the alarming spread of unemployment in England, some hundreds of British workers are now being set to work in the devastated regions—to clean up with pick and shovel the towns they once defended with rifle and grenade! What mighty currents are set in motion throughout the world by the everlasting pressure for a job!

Nevers,  
Saturday, Sept. 17.

"An old concern, France! An elderly and conservative people, these French—also skilled in the art of enjoying what they have instead of 'hustling' to get more." So any visitor is certain to cogitate after a few days in such long-established conditions as the past week has shown.

This afternoon, for instance, permitted a visit to a cathedral which has been ministering to the religious needs of the local population for something like 800 years—with a smaller church not far away dating and serving continuously from the tenth century!

Even here the inevitable posters call upon the laborer to defend his wage against every cut.

"For in defending your wages you are defending your life and the lives of your companions and your children. Organize with your fellow workers! Ally yourself with your union! That is your sole defense."

Such a modern appeal has evidently to beat hard upon the huge inertia of centuries before it can greatly disturb the "equilibrium" of the nation's life. No wonder these towns appear to delight in their setness—it serves as a Gibraltar against some of these new-fangled threats that come only with modern industrialism. So the new shops now being located here by the "Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Railway" are probably not altogether welcomed by the older people, for the entrance of large-scale industrial operation may change the social face of the city and increase the number of these posters. That is not very likely, judging from the attractive comfort of the workers' homes already erected amid the pleasant trees and just near enough to both the factory and the indispensable fishing.

Under such conditions the poster preachment is not likely to have the same appeal here as over at the famous Schneider artillery establishment visited yesterday at Le Creusot. There the company has shown great interest in pensions and the older native workers appear

well contented. Among the younger French workers, also, plans are evidently in operation for educating those most anxious to increase their skill and so advance their standing. The foreign-born laborers, however, appear to leave something to be desired. Among these are to be seen an amazing contingent of 3,000 Chinese! Most of them live in a guarded cantonment, but some have worked out the contracts which brought them over during the war, and now give signs of affluence in their white collars and stylish clothes. Their jobs in the plant do not appear any worse than those of the foreign-born workers in our own American steel plants, except that machinery has evidently not been introduced to the various processes to anything like the same extent as at home. If it were, a good many of the present force of 18,000 workers—30,000 during the war—could probably be laid off.

There at Le Creusot and also in the great artillery works at St. Chamont, near St. Etienne, one gets again the same impressions as in the north—the importance of the French engineer as an operating official, the cleanliness and accuracy of the French machinist, the popularity of American machinery, and, oddly enough, the slight use of labor-saving machinery, particularly in the rolling-mills. Still further, practically all machinery here goes at considerably less speed than at home. This last makes it easier to understand how American steel comes to be made so cheaply that it can compete with any steel in all the world in spite of the fact that the operators of its machines are better paid per day and per hour of work than the steel workers here, or, for that matter, in any

other country. In the new and up-to-date departments at both these establishments, as also at Krupp's, great locomotives are occupying hands which previously were busied with armor-plate and cannon—now that all the world is waiting to see what the Washington Conference or the League will say about these last.

There is evidently less of the military discipline in the industrial relations and a warmer personal relationship between employer and employee in these French towns than at Krupp's. But in different ways the same word—paternalism—appears to express the chief fault of all. Both Krupp's and Le Creusot, however, are examples of ownership which passes regularly from father to son through several generations—ownership both of the plant for the masters and of the jobs in the plant for the men; and in the course of such generations a good many difficulties between manager and worker stand a fair chance of getting straightened out to a degree we find it hard to appreciate. Such long-continued closeness—the utmost conceivable antithesis to the absentee management such as we know so well—creates, however, all the more expectation of cleaner towns than either Essen or Le Creusot or St. Chamont, and better living conditions than at the latter two. As at St. Etienne, it must be remembered, also, that in these French manufacturing centres the whole mode of life is less compelling than that of such an American centre as, say, Chicago. Here the farm is close by—with, usually, a demand for native workers who may not be happy in the factory. It is strange to step out from watching the assembling of handsome, up-to-the-minute locomotives or of ultra-modern

"tanks" which replace their caterpillar tread on level ground with motor wheels that cover fifty miles an hour, and then in the street have to wait for a team of oxen to pass!

The broad shoulders of those oxen support the impressions of the week—and more or less of the whole summer—as to the secondary position which France gives to modern industry as compared with us youngsters across the Atlantic. In that connection, by the way, this morning's paper gives a storiette by a well-known writer which sets out the national emphasis upon security in a manner fairly shocking. According to the tale, the aged father permits the young son's marriage to a stylish young society woman. Shortly after, however, he breaks the news that he has suddenly come upon severe financial reverses. As a result, the loyal son and the new wife cut down their scale of living in order to make him a long series of loans. Finally the young man is forced to try to save his life by a short and inexpensive vacation, just as the hoped-for grandson is born. In vain. The strain has been too great. On the return from the funeral, the old father strokes lovingly the head of his grandchild in the arms of the young, but widowed, mother, as he breaks the news:

"At any rate, I am most happy to think that the child will never need to worry about his future. You see," as the poor widow tries to understand the reason for so cruel a deception, "you see, I have this long time kept a fortune ready for him—200,000 francs in all! Is it not splendid? I told you about my supposed financial troubles only in order to make sure that you would not



**THE CLOSENESS BETWEEN MODERN INDUSTRIAL AND CONSERVATIVE AGRICULTURAL FRANCE IS TYPIFIED IN LE CREUSOT**

You "step out from watching the assembling of handsome, up-to-the-minute locomotives or of ultra-modern 'Tanks'—and then in the street have to wait for a team of oxen to pass!"



**IN EUROPE GENERALLY, AS IN THIS SUBURB OF PARIS, EVERYBODY WORKS, INCLUDING THE DOG**



induce my son to live beyond his means and thereby ruin us—and this my grandson."

Friends here say that the story is somewhat exaggerated but, on the whole, not untrue to the French requirement of a sure future whatever its cost in terms of the present.

Am sorry fast travel has made impossible the usual number of personal contacts with the workers. Glad, however, not to have missed what is evidently the very heart of the country's older iron and coal industries, especially now that these represent the new post-war France in suffering the increased complexity caused by the influx of large numbers of foreign-born workers. Whether she will avoid the class misunderstandings and conflicts brought by the same change to America, will depend on whether the employers see the necessity of modified policies or whether, like many American employers, they continue to think of their relationships to their workers in the same easy-going terms of simpler days. If they do, they can be more easily forgiven here, considering both the resistance and the safeguard afforded by these hundreds of years of simpler existence and relationships which present themselves here at every corner.

As a matter of fact, it requires a good deal of an effort to think of mixing in the stream of active, modern worries, hopes, and fears of the troubled world of the latest 1921 model which the streets of Paris will present in the morning.



## CHAPTER XV

### PARIS—AND BY AIR TO ENGLAND

Paris,  
Friday, Sept. 23.

HERE are a few results of the week's operations as a human listening post along a wide front, beginning with the forceful and urbane statesman now occupying the chair of the President of the Council, or Prime Minister, in the famous and imposing offices at the Quai d'Orsay, M. Aristide Briand:

"Yes, my experience as a member of the working class that composes so large a part of the population has undoubtedly had much to do with my serving as President of the Council a number of times. You know, I was the father of the 'C. G. T.' and, with Jaurés, a co-founder of the Socialist group. Sometimes, as you can imagine, is it not so? I have regretted their attitude—many times my worker friends have turned upon me because I felt constrained as an official of the government, you understand, to put the interests of the Republic above those of a class—*any* class. (You recall when many years ago I strenuously fought the strike of the railway men, yes?) Nevertheless, I know that the dangerous moment for any government arrives when it gets out of touch with the mass of the people. That is why Germany lost the war. Its government failed to represent the true sentiments and aspirations of the German people. Such a

separation is very difficult here in France. Then, too, most of our native workers are intelligent, trained artisans, makers of goods of quality rather than quantity. It has been so for generations. . . . Yes, it is different now that we have regained the lost provinces with their iron ore and their potash. But the old artisanship is too deeply ingrained in the French spirit ever to be lost, and we shall add to it the new spirit needed for finding the markets for our surplus.

“In that connection I hope that the great nations will find it increasingly easy to get together not only for the discussion of political policies but also for agreeing upon what might be called commercial and industrial spheres of influence, thus reducing to a minimum the possibility of war-like competition. Certainly there is now increased willingness on the part of all thoughtful governments to recognize their base in economic and industrial affairs. And that base is not national but world-wide. No one nation can alone cure itself of the present unemployment. The causes of the difficulty are international; they require international—world-wide—treatment. In the former days before we understood the economic ties which bind the world’s people together, the statesmen gathered to discuss a boundary or some other political problem. In the light of our present understanding, I do not see why the statesmen and diplomats should not get together for finding ways and means of bettering business conditions, and most of all of avoiding unemployment. Surely nothing is more evident to any one who has been a worker or close to them than that no people can be happy unless its means of livelihood has been given the utmost of stabil-

ity and regularity. Failure in that regard drives men toward Bolshevism, is it not so?

"So with Germany—if the German people settle down to some regularity of life, and republican institutions become more firmly established, with less of murder and threats from the military reactionaries, then I for one believe we French will have slight reason to fear the results of their normal existence and development.

"As to the Society of Nations, the Upper Silesian dispute gives an excellent example of its possibilities. Without it, fighting might be going on at this moment. Just see what has happened! We diplomats sit about the council table. After we have heard the reports of the technical advisers, we are agreed—yes, we are ready to sign. But there are certain of us whose people—whose publics, you understand—would not consent to such action on the part of their representatives. They are still living in the high emotions of the war, is it not so? Yes, they care comparatively little for expert reports; they are too excited to wish to make big decisions upon the basis of calm and careful study. Well, then, what is to be done? In the old days we should have had to separate, each wondering who would be the first to save his dignity by recourse to arms. But now—now we are able to give the problem over to the League. We can have confidence that they will hear the same reports, and so will come to much the same decision. In that case, the right answer will have been obtained, but you see plainly, is it not so?—quite without any statesman or political party paying for the right answer the price of their existence and further usefulness. Is it not useful?

Yes, all of us diplomats are now in a position, if any of our peoples dislike this decision, to shrug our shoulders and say that it is, of course, something quite beyond our control. So, you see, the League is very useful here because it permits us all to give calmer thought to certain great subjects, for here in Europe a Prime Minister cannot go too far ahead of his people or he is given his departure. It is not quite so true in America where in a sense you are less democratic in that your representatives are chosen for a certain fixed period.

"All this, I think, is typical of the new situation in which governments exist to-day. We must try to quiet ourselves, to see things clearly, and then work upon them unitedly. Just as victory on the battle-field came only when our programmes had been amalgamated, so now we must try to steer away from separate councils and separate programmes. And in this necessity, the economic situation is not at all different from the political. In both these fields, furthermore, if you will permit me, America has too wide a range of interests throughout the world for her permanently to stand aside."

As far removed from him as possible is the editor of the Communist paper, *L'Humanité*, M. Amedée Dunois. In America those who fear the good sense of any group they don't know would long ago have put in jail the writer of his virulent attacks upon the present system of society, or his various defenses of the Bolshevik régime. It was a surprise, accordingly, to find the man's face a striking resemblance to the pictured Christ! From moment to moment his look of seriousness, rather than sadness, was lighted by the gleam of the enthusiast's hope—

almost cheer—as he recounted the progress being made by his cause throughout the country:

“Yes, we are disappointed that affairs do not go better in Russia. Nevertheless, it has to date served only to increase our faith and our determination that some day the proletariat shall rule in this country, and, by reason of the Russian experiment, with less need of compromise with capital than there. In fact, the morale of the true Communist here has never been better. You have noticed, perhaps, yes? how close we are to the control of the ‘General Federation of Labor’? Indeed, if the vote is counted carefully according to membership we are already in numerical mastery. The federation officials, these oppose us only because they are far from the mass of the voters—much farther than we. Naturally they want to hold their positions. These labor bureaucrats—it is from these that most of our opposition comes. Just think, to-day the Socialist organ of the federation is selling only one-twentieth of our own paper’s circulation! Remarkable, is it not?”

And now one of the editors of the Socialist paper. Even though a marked conservative compared to Dunois, he is said to have missed narrowly a firing squad for his disloyalty during the war. Following the heavy loss of federation membership and so, of course, of circulation, he is depressed at the prospect of the immediate future of the organized workers of France:

“No, we don’t take the Communists seriously—you see, we have too big a proportion on our farms. These are not likely to give over their little holdings. . . . Yes, to be sure, there is something to hope for in the worker’s

present intense hatred of war as a useless means of settling disputes between nations. The difficulty is that the worker group is not sufficiently well-educated to be proof against the government's propaganda. So if the government wanted to-morrow to make out a case against Italy or England it would within a few weeks so fill every worker in the land—and every one else, for that matter—with hatred against the enemy that the whole crowd would want to march off at once to the battle-field! Yes, that's true, though I wish it were not. And education is so slow that I see no way of preventing it for a long time. . . . The great body of organization members bring constant pressure upon the leaders for higher wages—always higher wages. But they are slow to study or to work hard in order to increase their ability. The public is also too reluctant to see the necessity of helping its workers to get their proper share of prosperity and so to add to the strength and happiness of the whole state. For both groups the easiest way appears to put the whole problem into politics—and then count the votes. Our railway men, for instance, can hardly be relied upon greatly to assist the general labor movement, simply because they hope always to obtain their wish through politics."

"I have plenty of friends among the younger generation of Frenchmen," says a young American connected with an official body of observers. "They discuss by the hour not whether France can live or not, but whether she can last as much as fifty years or not. Their ideals are men like Poincaré and Tardieu. For them the situation is so serious as to justify any sort of military or other

policy which aims to secure for France the maximum chance at the saving of her life. Naturally the explosion of the huge quantity of chemicals at Oppau confirms their fears of a new, deadly chemical warfare. They cannot conceive of a restored France without German money—nor a safe France without either a restrained Germany or an armed France. Meanwhile they believe—like many others, including some Americans here—that the unconscious influence of America is to encourage Germany not to pay—also to encourage many of the different nations not to accept the decisions made at Versailles as to their boundaries—and so to keep the whole Continent in a turmoil. All agree that the interests of America are well represented by the unofficial reparations commission under the leadership of Mr. R. W. Boyden of Boston. Having no official standing in the dispute, the commission is able to await the moment when Italy and England on one side get into a deadlock with France and Belgium on the other. Then—with the help of Mr. Boyden's remarkable ability to listen and think, or tell a good story at the right moment—it appears wondrously able at suggesting a third alternative which secures the general approval."

An English statesman gave the European view-point on America yesterday when he told of going to the office of the commission not knowing that it had moved across the street:

"When the concierge tried to stop me, I waved him proudly aside and went up. When I found the place bare I had a terrible shock. 'My God!' I said to myself, 'here these Americans have got out from under again!'"

And finally a Paris business man who has had considerable touch with American industry:

"Yes, the war has caused much trouble in French homes. But among the best people divorce is practically unthinkable. Partly, because in many cases half a man's fortune must go to the wife as alimony. Then there are always the children, and, you know, the French worship them too much to let them suffer in that way. . . . Me, I wanted, of course, to make a good marriage, as we say. It was necessary, therefore, to wait till I had made my career. That meant waiting until I was thirty-five. Of course, you would not expect a man to live as a monk till then! . . . Now I save one-half of all I earn, yet my wife fears always that I spend too much on her and my family. Yes, so careful and so anxious are we French for the future of our families and our children. My friends, they are all shocked when I say I will not try to give my fortune to my boy and girl. I will rather train them to earn their livings, my daughter at typewriting and my son in engineering. That is not French. Here the father at the head of a business is too apt to put his son in after him even though it might be much better to hire an outside manager.

"You see, when we earn or make money here we must be careful not to risk it. It is too hard to make it again. For one thing, our business is so much smaller than with you. That is why many people here look down upon a friend who advertises. 'Ah! Alphonse is advertising,' they say. 'He is then perhaps alarmed; things cannot be going well with him.' . . . That may prevent our learning to sell our new supplies of iron and steel upon



the great scale now required. Me, I fear for it. I think it is more likely that we will make the supplies, yes—for we do that well with our capable engineers—but that we will put them in the market through the selling organizations which have been built up throughout the world by the Germans, Belgians, or the English. But nobody can tell. Here as everywhere in Europe the situation is that of a kaleidoscope. Every week it changes—yes, almost every day. No one in France—I think also in Germany—can be dogmatic about the future. It is only too hard even to know the present—so new and strange it all is from anything before.”

To-morrow at ten o'clock our airplane starts for London. Perhaps getting up in the air will give a perspective helpful to the final placing of the puzzle pieces—with the help of the cool-headed cogitations of our stolid British friends.

P. S.—The 80,000 strikers at Roubaix-Turcoing have not yet got together with “les patrons,” who plead the disordered markets of Russia, Germany, the Balkans, etc., as requiring a lowering of wages. Fifteen thousand soldiers are on duty in the effort to keep the peace. The country's standing army, by the way, is reported this morning as totalling 769,628, including 87,000 now in the Rhine district.

Paris Flying Field,  
Saturday morning;  
September 24.

Waiting for our “avion” from London—reported delayed by fog. Luckily the time passes quickly. Every few minutes a motor drives up and unloads a group of men and women who walk in for the weighing of their

bags and then pass out to the field and up the steps into a small monoplane or into the salon of one of the larger biplanes marked, say, for Brussels or Berlin. A moment later an assistant gives the big propeller a whirl. With the exhaust roaring, the machine "taxies" down the field, then turns and, with a perfect cannonading of the exhaust at full speed, bounces between ground and air for a few rods, then finally is up and off into the gray haze of the far horizon. A little later a big bird is visible from the direction of Strassburg or, perhaps, Prague, and shortly thereafter, when the big blades are still, the attendants put up the steps for a group of stylish people to alight and walk through the custom-house and into the taxi for down-town Paris.

Evidently this matter of air transportation has come to stay—because it has come to serve. Instead of spending four or five hours on the train to the Channel, some uncomfortable weather on that restless water, then the train again to London, a flight of less than three hours from here puts one in Croyden Field, a half-hour's ride from Piccadilly Circus. And the cost is practically the same as first-class railway fare. Such charges require the help of government subsidy. That air transportation is so common here and not in America is, I presume, because it is one of the commercial by-products of the universal interest in national self-protection here.

At present my chief objection is that this Grand Central Station of the air routes is located in a part of Paris which is most travelled by funerals. Nobody appeared particularly happy to come, this morning, past six different hearses and processions!

Here comes the huge bird now!

Up in the air!

The noise of the two motors out on the great wings is deafening. It's impossible to talk to any of the seven other passengers in the wicker chairs on both sides of the aisle that opens out from the cabin to the cockpit and our two pilots. Already we have out our papers and pencils for naming to each other this or that of the landmarks passing beneath. The beauty of the country at our feet is amazing—great plaques of green with huge figures of yellow sunlight where the clouds let it through. Now the pattern is crisscrossed with the slender shining silvers of the steel rails. We must be up only about 1,000 feet, else we could not see the swishing of the horses' tails. Here's a field of a wondrous combination of mauve and pink—the difference between the turned and unturned earth of the farmer's plough. If only he could see the stunning rug he's making! And that colossal bouquet of different shades of green and brown and rusty yellows—of course it's nothing but a new aspect of an old forest!

What a satisfying noise comes from the solid grind of hard-working motors. I hug every particle of it—for the reassurance it gives of the force that is working for us. Being in a balloon without being able to *hear* the gas working for you must be terrible! If the grind hesitates or changes for the briefest fraction of an instant, every particle of soul and body is on tiptoe—and regular breathing returns only with the regularity of the straining motors.

Field-glasses report that the great machine shop directly beneath us believes thoroughly in cleanliness with-

in its compact high fence. . . . This method of travel makes plainer than ever how solidly France has placed her conservative feet upon beautiful farms—beautiful and comfortable farms, like that one over there now where the pigs are scampering about the edge of the little pond by the manure pile within the hollow square of the artistic and bounteous brick barn.

Behold Beauvais cathedral beneath us—like a great architectural and ecclesiastical hen protecting her children beneath those red-tiled roofs of the compact town. The hen must feel queer to feel herself become a landmark for air pilots! The long rectangular black bug down there is doubtless an express-train. The engineer probably takes his fifty miles an hour seriously; from here it looks like old stuff! And now, just beneath us, the river Somme shows a network of burnished gold as it goes out to meet the sea, in a great yellow ocean stretching off into the hazy north. At the Channel's edge the funnels of a sunken steamer show up through the breakers, while the dozens of little brown triangles of sail bring the fishing fleet back home.

The air is changing. . . . I wish the plane's tip would not move about quite so much. It's unpleasant, too, to see the drops of oil come down out of the engine on one of the great steel struts, quaver on their way out to the wing's farthest edge and then gather up courage from other tiny drops and finally, after many efforts, jump boldly off into space. Wonder where they land—or if they land. . . . Now France is hidden behind a bank of clouds and England is nowhere to be seen—nothing but green water and whitecaps beneath us—and inside us

## 232 HORNY HANDS AND HAMPERED ELBOWS

the memory of the plane which only a few days ago in this same part of the route suddenly fell as its motors stopped, one of them starting up again just as it struck the water. . . . Nothing ahead except a bank of clouds—now they're alongside. Each wisp seems to hiss its name as we whizz past it—mist! mist! Clouds hurry by on both sides. Has the evening arrived so suddenly? . . . Think I'll return to Paris by train!

Ah, there's England ahead! Feeling better, thanks.

Who could believe it possible to find England so different from France—with so small a piece of water between! No longer the red roofs and the mauves and pinks and lavenders in the fields. Tiles and turf here all of the same tawny or dull brown. Amazing! Is this the result of a different climate or merely a different disposition? Or both? And is the second caused by the first? No wonder the English are matter-of-fact and the French emotional! Yes, European nature is a quick-change artist! A thirty-mile partition and a complete change of both aspect and disposition!

Nothing but clouds again—black and ugly. Ought to be picking up the smoke of London. Just to be frank, I wish we would. I don't like that stage-whisper hiss of hurrying fog, even though it's we who do the hurrying. Wonder if they have gas enough to get back to those big fields by the coast, if we have to land. Evidently the motors are unhappy. Funny how disconcerting that is. The pilot is evidently anxious.

Neighbor across the aisle points to clouds and shakes head. I laugh—but find I can't hear myself laughing. Makes a fellow feel queer—as though he didn't

mean it. Why doesn't London show up? The sheep are bigger here—no, we are flying much lower—only two or three hundred feet. That's dangerous for so huge a machine. Still the clouds—and their whispers—"Miss-ed! Missed!" Not nice! Well, if they're right, I've certainly had a fine time while the going was good. Clouds, clouds. . . . More engine trouble! It must be ticklish getting this affair down into one of these tiny fields. Well, anyway, "everybody's been awfully good to me"—given me a bully time, like—suppose I ought to have thanked 'em more. Engine's stopped! We're going down—fast! Whew!—we certainly gave that roof a close call! What's up—or, rather, down! We're bouncing! Wha. . . .

*Later.*—Police station—Maidstone.

"Hills between us and Croyden too high," the pilot explained after bringing us to a standstill in a stubble-field as gently as a dove. "We'll get a machine and take you up to the station near by, and you can take the train for the thirty miles into London."

We had hardly landed before half the population of the village was out to greet us, including the local constable. Now—after a ride in an American flivver-van—we are in the status of practically "alien invaders." One of the passengers has just declared a quart of whiskey; that and our surrendered passports are the only results after waiting four hours for the local excise officials.

*Still later.*—A friend who waited at Croyden reports that the company officials there were apparently more worried about us than we ourselves—and I'm willing to testify that that's saying a lot.

"Up until you reached the French side of the Channel, the manager was continually talking with your pilot by wireless telephone—with everything quite all right. Then for what seemed several hours, but probably wasn't, he was unable to get you. He kept calling for you out into space—with no reply whatsoever. Sort of creepy—yes, jolly uncanny, you know. And the Mogul, he nearly went off his head! Finally when your man answered, he threw down the instrument and waltzed about the place—yes, over the chairs and on the desk! When he calmed down he got word of your trouble with the clouds. Finally, he gave the pilot orders to pick out the biggest field he could find and send you on by rail. 'Jolly fine pilot, that chap—the best in all the air lanes of the world,' he told us when he finally got word you were down safe and sound. Next time I'd rather not meet you at Croyden, if you don't mind."

Until fog is mastered I'm afraid that flying is not going greatly to relieve the press of Europe's crowded room inside those various frontiers, although it must be a great joy to fly over not merely one but several of those incessant custom-houses!

## CHAPTER XVI

### READJUSTMENT IN ENGLAND

London,  
Friday, Sept. 30.

THE first man encountered here was an ex-soldier out of work and asking for a penny! The 2,000,000 of British unemployed make practically the same proportion as the 4,000,000 now reported jobless in America. The country's mayors have been telling Lloyd George that the situation is too wide-spread for them to cope with on any merely local basis. M. Briand would say, and Lloyd George would probably agree with him, that every prime minister would do well to go to some international and world-wide central office and make exactly the same report. As a matter of fact, the tariff walls erected by the different countries in their single-handed efforts at job protection have so far done about as much harm as good.

The new idea here seems to be that every man has an inalienable right to either "Work or Maintenance." The discussion is not so much what is the right amount to pay for a workless worker in the form of insurance benefits — over 300,000 have drawn their maximum twenty-two weeks of benefits—but what constitutes a full standard of living for a family of, say, five, whether obtained by work or charity.

"Why don't I go over and get a job at B——'s?" one worker asks. "Well, why should I work my 'ead off for



a quid (pound) a week . . . yes, a quid a week. Well, 'ere I am on the local doles a-gettin' my two pounds—no, that's the doles (charity), not insurance money because that's all done in. On that job I'd get only three pound or, perhaps, three pound ten. That makes, you see, only twenty or thirty shillin' more for my work than for my no-work."

"Of course, there is a good deal of work that needs doing, but nobody will let it out," so a citizen observes. "It's too expensive. You hire a man to do a short job and he stretches it out to make it last as long as possible. He nurses it until it grows into a big job at a big cost—a cost all out of reason. That's his way of keeping himself from the municipal charity doles and also of making sure that he doesn't take more than his share from other men that need it. Lately one of my own friends, a chap that used to be a good man, told me his story: 'I'm not afraid of work and never 'ave been, but I notice that w'ilst I do one-fourth of the 'ole job, all the others shuffle around and then get paid as much as ever I do. So I'm takin' it now as easy as they and I don't see why as ever I shouldn't.' "

On the other hand, over in my Welsh mining town, my friends are evidently working considerably harder than when I was among them a year ago.\* After the close of the mine strike, hardly more than half of the former workers were hired back—but with the surprising result that production became almost normal. Unfortunately, there is much unhappiness among them after

\*"Full Up and Fed Up": The Worker's Mind in Crowded Britain. (Page 61.)

their thirteen weeks' strike and its ending in what they consider a severe defeat. During the first of these weeks, the little town was in an uproar when crowds of the miners tried to prevent the safety men and the office clerks from manning the pumps and saving the mines from destruction.

"The worse we mikes it for the mawsters, the sooner over. In four days we'll 'ave them on their knees," so the Bolshies told their fellows.

"You see that hole up there half-way to the top of the hill?" one of my friends explained. "One of our miners was killed there. You see, the whole place ran out of coals. With the soup kitchens busy, some of the strikers tried to make a living by going up into the hills on almost anybody's property and taking out a few sacks for selling on the street. This one was covered by a fall as he dug. His son ran for help. Just as they were about to reach the old fellow, three other falls came in quick succession and they could hear him dying a few feet away. It has been very bad, here."

"If the leaders whom we refuse to employ call us unfair," one of the mine officials explained, "we show them their production records during the days they were practising 'ca-canny.' Some of them know very well that for weeks they filled only one tram of coal a day—besides boasting about it."

"Ah, it's terrible," says my old friend, the repairer. "Terrible punishment our leaders do 'ave—not to be 'set on' again after all this while. But it's fair devils these employers of ours—all employers—do be—fair devils and naught else, I tell ye. . . . Only eleven shil-

lings, one penny, we're gettin' now—with another cut to come soon. They do 'ave the power now, ye see? Yet 'twas not oos as was licked—only our leaders. They backed down—after we told 'em in the vote to stick—only a week befoor."

"Ah," adds the wife, "'twould be all right if only food would come down. Instead it goes always oop. Oh, 'tis terrible for men to 'ave to work for so little; with the children wantin' of their shoes and all, and shoes that dear!"

Good old Tom, the boss, looked old. An accident had put him into bed for days with life hanging in the balance.

"Yes, 'e 'ave let down a bit, like, 'e 'ave," volunteered his wife. "'E lets the men carry on now with only 'is eye over them. Because, in a sense o' speakin', the accident was needless; it 'appened, you see, when 'e kept at 'is work after a-finishin' of 'is turn."

A little later I found the young leader of the "Bolshies," who last year took the trouble to write up into Yorkshire warning his "comrades" there against me as a spy. Refused work here in the pits, he is now running a candy store—several babies came in with their pennies as we talked.

"They've the upper hand, now, the masters, but of course, 'tis only temporary. All this unemployment and all this war and bitterness, they are nothing but the setting of the stage for the final calling of the turn we Bolshies are waiting for."

"Yes, I'd say, they were almost right in believing that another great war will come within twenty years and will bring with it the end of civilization," he replied when

I asked him what he thought about this evident consensus of the opinion of both the workers and the statesmen of Europe. "Almost right they are, I'd say, but not quite. 'Twill be the end, not of civilization, but of capitalism—of the system we now know. That's why we Bolshies are hoping that the President's Conference and the League of Nations will fail. For if they do fail, then all the nations of the earth will be at each other's throats within ten years, without waiting for twenty. And when they do get at each other's throats, all we Bolshies have to do is to wait 'til they get through with those throats and then we can walk in and own the whole place. . . . Yes, all this unrest and unhappiness is leading to the barricades. And on the other side the barricades you'll find us and the system of society we stand for."

Perhaps, it is because this states exactly the alternative proposed by the radicals over here that makes Europe so much more interested in pushing forward any possible means of peaceful organization. Thus Mr. Garvin, the extremely thoughtful editor of *The Observer*, expresses his belief that if the League of Nations were to be wrecked to-morrow morning, we should have to organize another or a substitute to-morrow night in order to carry on all the hundred and one responsibilities which have been assigned to it.

On the train down out of the crowded valley—over 200,000 people are packed together in thirty narrow miles—a travelling salesman gave a new point of view on the "coops," or co-operative societies:

"For my own part, I'm jolly well through trying to sell them at all. You see, they have to pay small salaries

in order to show profit. So everywhere you go the officer in charge says to you: 'Well, now, Jack, I'm sorry, you know, but 'ere's 'ow it is. Your goods just don't seem to move; just seem to sit on the shelves, like.' You can tell by his eye what's the matter. After you fix a special commission to him personally, he says: 'Right you are! Well, I fancy it will be O. K. now. Good afternoon.' So all up and down the line, palms want to be oiled with 5 or 10 per cent velvet."

At several union offices the same discouragement is evident as in similar circles in France. The membership of the miners' union has fallen off immensely. On the street the same kind of workmen who last year talked of the power of the Triple Alliance of miners, transport and railway men as more powerful than the government, now calls it, with a snort of disdain, "the Cripple Alliance." Of that group, some of the leaders retaliate by blaming the most revolutionary of their adherents for pushing things so hard that they brought down public opinion upon the whole effort of the miners. Personally, I still believe that the decision obtained in the form of "standard wage, standard profit and profit sharing," would have been considered a gain for the workers if industrial conditions at the time, or since, had been anything like normal.

"It's not strange the coal men lost," so an important member of the steelmen's union expressed himself. "Too many of them—100,000 too many, you might say—were out of work before it started. Before it was finished, 90 per cent of our own members were on our union funds—no coal, no steel, you understand? We got down to

our last penny—as the worker says, ‘Yer cawn’t eat yer cike (cake) and ‘ave yer ha’penny, too.’ . . . The industrial revolution, if it ever comes here—which I doubt—will break out there in South Wales in such places as you visited—unless it breaks out earlier in Glasgow. For ourselves, our sliding scale of wages—up or down, you know, with the selling price of our product—has for years avoided bad feeling in steel. Now that work is a little slack we are trying to push our classes in various technical lines for our members. In fact, at an early conference we’re trying to persuade the whole trade-union movement to adopt this same programme everywhere.

“One reason for the success of our union is that its permanent officials do not come up for re-election every three years, as do most of the officials of most British unions. On the other hand, they can be let out by our executive council on three months’ notice at any time. That three-year—or periodic—re-election is the curse of British unionism. It makes, you see, every official into a trimmer. Every three years and all in between, any wild-eyed member can ask his union officers to go and get the moon for him and his pals, and then shake his finger in their faces and say: ‘Just you come back to us without it and then see what happens to you and your jobs!’ Why, the whole force of unionism from Land’s End to the Orkneys would be summoned instantly if the employers tried to insert a clause like that for putting their workers on that kind of a carpet every so often.

“Eight-hour day? Everybody knows it’s a huge success. Where it hasn’t worked out, committees of the men themselves have asked for a chance to look things

over and try to find out why. In one place the committee found nineteen men holding their jobs on pull and favoritism—nineteen 'umbrella men,' we call them. You know yourself that even a half dozen, if they're paid by results, will raise the very devil about a seventh being 'set on' unless he can increase their output."

Later a representative employer agreed that the eight-hour day would be the last thing the steel operators would now expect to touch, even though the low German mark has made it necessary for the British steel-makers to pare down their costs to a minimum.

The mark, incidentally, has now touched bottom at one-third of a cent! It is inconceivable that wages will be raised proportionately. That may mean more foreign business, perhaps, for Germany, but also more suffering and uncertainty for the worker and especially the "middle classes," and not only there but in France and elsewhere.

Extraordinary efforts are going forward here toward getting the unemployed into the radical groups—with, according to careful observers, disconcertingly large results. One observer reports 12,000 starving out of 30,000 jobless tin-miners in Cornwall. The textile country up around Lancashire is said to be badly scared at the competition of the new Indian cotton industry. The possibility of shipping some millions of citizens out of the country is receiving surprisingly serious attention from the public, though the government is reported to be paying slight attention to a reputed offer from Australia to take a million British immigrants during the next two years. Such things make an uncomfortable reminder of the pessimism of a certain prominent American financier

who, a few weeks ago in Geneva, expressed to me his belief that England can never again obtain her old industrial pre-eminence. Something like that has already been predicted by an Oxford economist and other experts who believe that in time the colonies will themselves at home fabricate the raw materials now sent to the island's factories, but their predictions allow considerably longer time than does the American's. Presumably, also, they make larger allowance for the Briton's amazing ability to adjust himself successfully to changed conditions—his reduction of "muddling through" to something like a science!

This "science" is, presumably, responsible for the signs of the return to pre-war conditions in many lines. The railways come back to private operation this week. The iron and steel business shows real improvement. The exclusive restaurants are reported now to be turning back all not properly attired in dress suit, white vest, "'n' everything." According to a fellow passenger—a member of the civil service—the damages caused by the British in France at such places as Douai have all been inspected, adjudicated and settled to the tune of 50,000,000 pound sterling!—besides, of course, the 75,000,000 reported as the cost of repatriating the Belgian refugees. Incidentally he says the next war will not prove so costly in bicycles, now that the governments are requiring their license and registration. In every way the government's attitude toward matters financial here appears immensely better than that of any Continental power. Surely, that is a good symptom.

Another evidence of this astonishing British ability to



meet changing circumstances is in the new relationship established since the war between the mother country and her colonies. According to it, all parts of the Empire now share in the responsibility for declaring war and in general enjoy a closer connection than ever before. The French call it "The United States of Great Britain." Here its new name is "The Commonwealth of Nations known as the British Empire." I believe time will show it the most important change in world institutions since 1918.

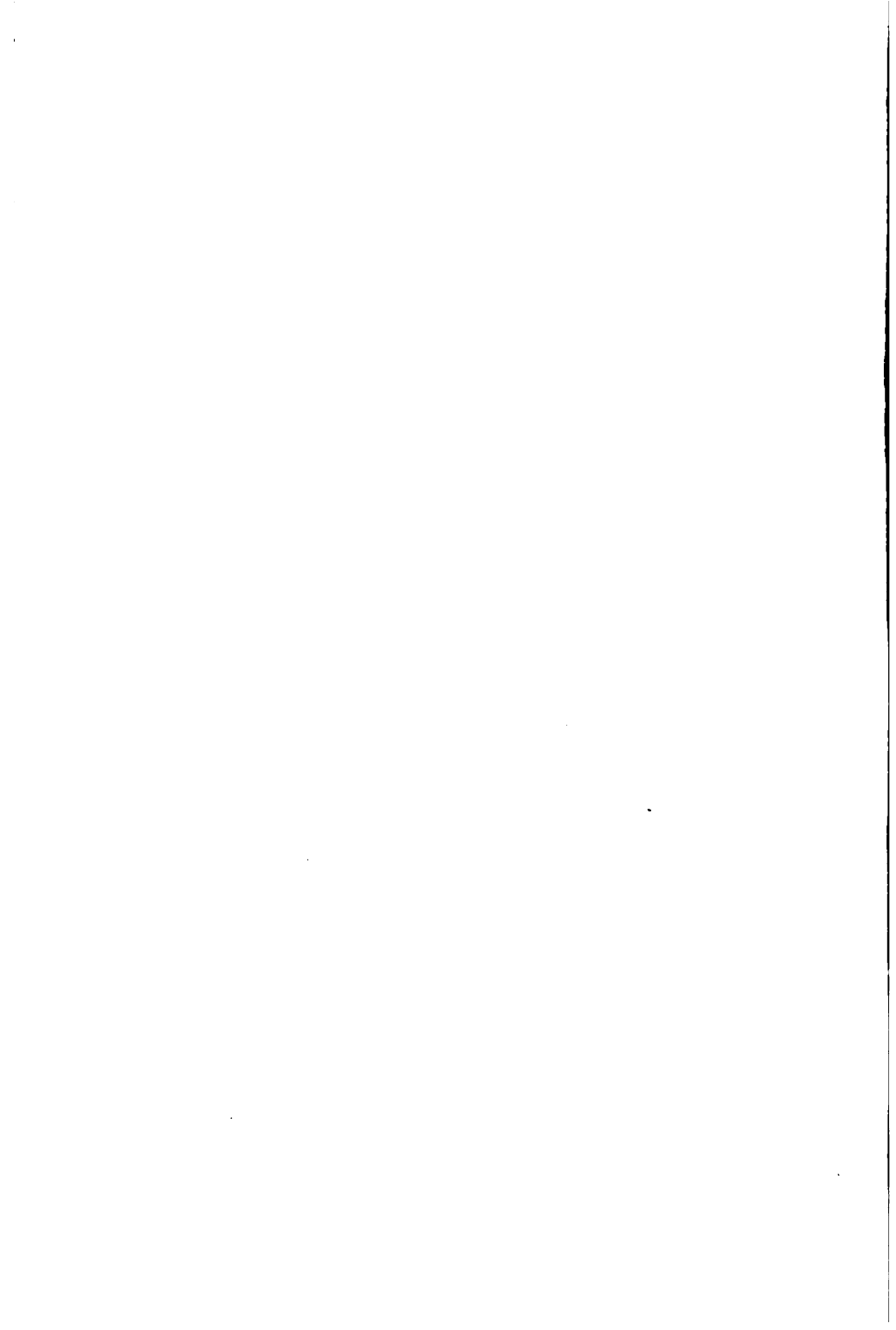
There is no question but that one great cause—or perhaps only a symptom—of this genius for modification and adjustment is the English newspaper. It has been a perfect feast after France and Germany to devour here each day, especially Sunday, great editions loaded down with detailed news stories from not only Britain but also the Continent, America, Australia, the Orient, and the Islands of the Sea. With so much information about their customers everywhere, added to the extraordinarily low overhead permitted by the age of so many of its manufacturing establishments, it is no wonder this people is, normally, so able somehow to keep selling its goods in every corner of the world.

Unhappily, the week has brought one great disappointment. With all my heart I have been nursing the hope that stolid old England would find reason for distrusting, yes, for largely discounting, France's fear of Germany—and so prove wrong my own failure to discount it. This hope was dashed the very first day here. *The Times* in a long editorial stated its belief that serious attention must be given to recent disclosures of certain expert ob-

servers as to the still belligerent mind and view-point of Germany, as evidenced in the retention of large supplies of arms, etc., etc. *The Times* is perhaps to be taken less seriously than before its owner was so anxious to make trouble for the ruling party. The disclosures also, probably, do not properly distinguish between the republican government and the military reactionaries. But all the same, the prospects for plentiful jobs and general happiness would be much better if such disclosures, whether fully true or not, were completely impossible.

And now for the gang-plank one end of which rests upon a certain porch in Cleveland, U. S. A.—there to discover, if possible, what it all means!

P. S.—“The workers in the building trades,” so runs a Paris head-line, “throughout the vicinity of Paris vote with lifted hands for a general strike.”



***PART II***  
**CONCLUSIONS**



## CHAPTER XVII

### HORNY HANDS

Cleveland, July, 1922.

ONE thing is evident. The laborer in western Europe—whether on the Continent or in England—is a hard worker. He lives in the land of horny hands as compared with America. He does not wear canvas or other gloves as does his fellow across the sea, but the denim of working clothes is much more evident upon his streets. He expects to grow more blisters and give with simple tools more sweat and “elbow grease” to his work than does his friend in America—and to get less for it. His standard of living is certainly below that of his “Yankee” fellow worker. His ability to earn and enjoy the minimum pleasures and satisfactions of life is certainly less.

On both sides of the Atlantic the worker is to-day in the clutch of the high cost of living. On both sides, also, he is held in the grip of a falling labor market that prevents his making any effective protest—indeed it has everywhere prevented the success of any of the larger strikes. At all times, too, the European worker has evidently learned to accept and be fairly comfortable with a smaller share of the possessions and pleasures to which the American worker is accustomed. In France the worker does stand a fairly good chance of possessing his home; in England, a fairly minute one; but, owned or unowned, these homes hardly compare in comfort with those of the corresponding citizen here in the States.

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The craftsman who parks his flivver outside the Toledo or Bridgeport factory considers himself hardly any luckier, as compared with his neighbor, than does the artisan who takes off his bicycle clips as he enters the "Usine," in Douai or Longwy: France, Germany, Belgium, and Britain possess fewer automobiles than the State of New York. The enjoyment of a telephone is for the European worker unthinkable, and even the talking-machine is something of a rarity. The attitude toward meat has been indicated. Without attempting anything like a careful study of figures, it would seem that the labor leader of Glasgow comes fairly close to the situation for western Europe as well as Britain in his statement:

"The American worker certainly enjoys a standard of living not less than 50 per cent above that of our workers here: his wage scale is not less than 75 per cent higher."

And, on the whole, the British worker of the upper half certainly lives better than the corresponding Belgian and German, and probably better than the corresponding French native-born worker.

Without any doubt the status enjoyed and the figure cut by the American worker as an integral part of the community is higher and greater than in Europe. Also, because of the absence of anything like Europe's lines of class, immensely more hopeful. One sign of all this is the surprisingly slight difference in the wage of the skilled laborers of Europe as compared with semiskilled and unskilled workers. With us these differences are so great, not only in wages but in dignity and responsibility, that there is undoubtedly a greater distance between our skilled men and our unskilled, foreign-born laborers than between

those same skilled workers and the superintendents and other representatives of capital. This simply means that the whole body of hand workers abroad is restricted into a more nearly uniform and certainly more definitely characterized group than here, where at the top our worker group shades off almost imperceptibly into the administrative body. That restricted compactness of the workers tends in turn to persuade the rest of the citizenry in Europe to the comfortable assumption that, in the nature of the case, the life of the "working classes" cannot be expected to give any real satisfaction.

Yes, as a whole—and it is necessary always to remember how dangerous it is to generalize regarding such huge and such varied groups as comprise the workers of any country—the wage-earners of Europe expect to give more muscle in a day and get less bread and betterment for it than their colleagues in America. That does not mean, however, that they accomplish more. On the contrary, their individual productiveness is less—undoubtedly much less. That is true partly because their work has been given less thought by their supervisors for the saving of time and effort than here; partly, also, because the long history of hand-work has there built up a very deep-rooted sense of craftsmanship—of job mystery and "know how." This has taken the property of the job so seriously as to form considerable of a barrier to the introduction of either labor-saving methods or labor-saving—and mystery-destroying, perhaps also job-destroying—tools. This sense of job ownership as well as skill ownership, as inherited and passed on to succeeding generations, has been the compelling force behind the more



or less general pressure of the unions for the saving of jobs, even at the cost of individual and national productiveness. It is an error to see the unions only as a cause and not as an effect.

But the worker is not the only one in Europe who finds it necessary to live under a narrow sheet as compared with America. The same holds true for the employer group as well. As a class he has nothing like the same opportunity to earn a wide margin of profit in the countries visited as here in the States.

When all is said and done, every country, together with all its citizens, whether employer or employee, has to be content in the long run to divide up the total value produced from either the national material resources or from the services performed in the fabrication or disposition of the resources of other countries. It is evident that the cause of the comparative margin of practically all groups of Continental society is represented by something more fundamental than the shortcomings of any or all classes: it is rather the shortcomings typified by those irregular and deep-down eighteen-inch and three-foot coal seams as described. Contrast these—whether in France, Belgium, or Germany—with, for instance, those of West Virginia. There recently a friend pointed from a great mountainside off toward the North:

"From here clear down to the Ohio River, seventy-five miles, you will find a solid seam of coal of excellent quality and with few admixtures of rock or other matter, lying with magnificent regularity, seldom less than four feet in thickness or more than nine!"

Much the same could be said for our other natural—

and job-giving—resources. It is the greatest and most far-reaching difference between the two continents and the peoples they support.

The skimpiness of Mother Nature in Europe as compared with her bounteousness to us, this, together with the longer use of her gifts there than here, is the fundamental cause of that curtailment of opportunity which affects the whole people. The fixity of that grip upon the job and the division of the whole population into definite groups according to the nature and standing of the job gripped, these are the "protective behavior" whereby the lessened opportunity is made to contribute the required maximum of security. Any lessening of the first of these always automatically produces pressure for the increase of the second. Similarly, too, the accumulated demonstration of the unfeasibility of men's enjoying opportunity as a result of their individual effort, always persuades them to use the protection of group or class team-work. And in that strategy, as in the case of Germany, dependable defense may require initial offense. In Europe this defensive team-work has in some ways been adopted almost as much by the managers as by the craftsmen: it is almost as serious for the employer to go beyond the practice of his fellows in, say, the expression of interest in his workers as for an employee to show an unseemly loyalty to his capitalist employer.

Britain, Germany, and Belgium have done more than France to make up for the deficiency of native materials by the development of service values. Nevertheless it is, I believe, the fault of Mother Nature rather than human

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nature or human institutions that industrial Europe shows everywhere a much wider gap between the director and the directed than does industrial America. Without doubt, also, that gulf is not only wider but enormously more permanent and impassable.

This, in turn, is responsible for the fact that an observer encounters in a week more radicals—more disbelievers in the present system of society—among the workers of Europe than in a month here—assuming, of course, that he moves among comparable groups in both countries.

Doubtless, our own wage-earners would be immensely more unhappy under the same conditions of work and life than are their European brothers, for these last, as we have seen, have for generations inherited a surprising ability to make the most of a modicum. Much of the expression of the protest encountered is caused, therefore, I believe, not so much by the surroundings themselves as by the sense of the width of the gap which must be bridged before those protests are to obtain result. In the land of the narrow sheet and the wide gap, that is, the protestant must pound the table and raise his voice if his desires are to carry across to the ear of either the public or the capitalist. That failing, he is forced to contrive ways of registering his unhappiness in more extreme efforts—or perhaps in the absence of effort represented by sabotage, the “on-the-job strike.” Naturally, enough, also, the constant barrier of the gulf tends to drive the resultless protestant on to the platform offered by politics. Similarly, too, it tends to recommend to him some form of society which makes a point of abhorring exactly such sound-proof gulfs and vacuums.

The comparative narrowness of the gulf here with us and the comparative feasibility of its bridging, this is undoubtedly the reason why, as a group, the leaders of our American labor movement have not adopted even Socialism—to say nothing of Communism—to anything like the extent of their colleagues across the sea. The strange thing is that the same Sam Gompers who, with his maximum demand for collective bargaining, is considered by European leaders as a hopeless standpatter, is here felt by many employers to be a radical of the deepest dye. The real difference is that Mr. Gompers doesn't need to make so much fuss nor to be so extreme, simply because he and his followers are already, before they start to talk, so much closer to the employers with whom they wish to negotiate. Though the American, like the French and British, leaders undoubtedly have their times of depression, nevertheless, they are convinced that by their comparatively moderate methods they have not only put their followers into a better position here than there, but also moved them a greater distance from the starting-point. They have simply adapted their method to that enormous difference in the class lines and class gulfs. It was John Mitchell of the miners who said that no labor movement can be truly aggressive until it operates as the cutting edge of a distinct and more or less fixed working class. In the absence of that fixed and therefore hopeless, alignment, the individual may at any moment cast off his affiliation with his class in the belief that he can "make the grade" more successfully alone. Under such circumstances, of course, perfect class discipline is impossible.

This difference in social stratification due, at bottom,

mainly to the difference of geological layers, thus comes to make it fruitless to discuss the truth or falsity of the statement, frequently encountered, that "the European labor movement in general, and the British in particular, is thirty years ahead of the American."

The difference is immensely greater than that of either method or degree. It is the difference between the Land of *Holding On* and the Land of *Getting On*. It is for the American public to say by its attitude toward the treasures of opportunity still locked up in its unused raw resources how soon we are to see an equally hopeless widening and broadening of class cleavages in the social structure we are rearing upon the foundation given us by nature. Also, for the American employer to determine by his attitude toward both his customers and his associated workers how soon these last must rely, not upon reason and right, but upon pounding the drum or building the barricade of class warfare, as the only means of satisfying the self-respect of American citizens. By too easy an assumption of the permanence of either our material goods or of the efficiency and satisfactoriness of our productive and distributive service, we may all become the victims of that pressure which is inseparable from a lessened national unit of value delivered. With that is sure to come a tightening of all the screws of self-protection—class solidarity, organized opposition to machinery and other restrictions of output, governmental standardization of procedure—every form of abandonment of the risks of opportunity and initiative for the certainties of security. All these appear to protect the individual but in actuality tend to lessen the basic unit of value pro-

duced. This shortly increases the pressure and so brings another turn of the screws—for another round of the vicious circle.

At the present moment, whether for better or for worse, the American employer enjoys a much larger freedom from either governmental or union restriction than his friends abroad. That represents our public's present conviction that our situation entitles him to a larger degree of responsibility. But that conviction rests upon continued demonstration of results. It is threatened today most of all by the absentee management of the remote corporation head and by the folly of the near-by executive who, in the memory of twenty years ago, still continues to boast of his calling his workers "all by their first name," but fails completely to organize his relations with his present enlarged personnel on the basis of anything like the unfailing sincerity and sensitiveness which may for years have characterized his relations with his customers.

That threat is opposed by two constructive tendencies, among others. One of these is the lately developed college or graduate school of business for training the next generation of industrial captains in the principles and the technic, as well as the sentiment, of right relations with men. Europe has nothing quite like these courses, but our next step is to follow the example of France in adding to our training in engineering the French emphasis upon the human factor in production.

The other is the awakened interest of our public to the part which the prosperity of the workers plays in the prosperity of the whole people. This active interest is

to-day puzzled by the way such matters as coal and transportation have suddenly cast off their former local or regional dimensions and assumed the startling proportions and complexities of national problems in which each region must have consideration as a part of a closely related whole. It will require serious effort for the opinion of an easy-going and highly individualistic public to master these new proportions and complexities, just as these have puzzled the most up-to-date corporation officials and labor leaders. But whether the public is altogether the master of both the facts and the sentiments of the new nation-wide type of dispute or not, it nevertheless remains the arbiter; for right or wrong, the public makes the final decision. The same public opinion, also, decides from day to day whether the employer can be trusted to continue in his present comparative freedom or whether he must be given fresh and unmistakable reminders to keep open the roads to individual Opportunity in the Land of Getting On while making its harbors of Security somewhat more like those in the Land of Holding On. In case these reminders are not heeded, the result is certain to bring about the same vicious coil of self-protection here as there—and to the hurt not only of the worker but of every other individual and group beneath our flag.

According to the thesis of our preface, any factor which markedly affects a people's working conditions is bound to have highly significant repercussions upon its conditions of living and hence of its thinking and feeling.

Perhaps, accordingly, if we discuss some of these effects, we may find an explanation for those other tokens

of the present mind of Europe and her workers which are seen with such sad frequency alongside the horny hands and the denim of hard work—I mean the hampered elbows of limitation and the crape of mourning.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### HAMPERED ELBOWS

JUST as the Bedouin of the North African desert is driven to a fatalistic philosophy by constantly noting the demonstrated omnipotence of his natural surroundings, so the long-established acceptance of material meagreness persuades a person or a people to the general use of the grooves which promise a maximum of protection and certainty. Both expansion and self-preservation are likely thus to appear linked up with the known certainties of long experience—that is, with the past.

This or something much like it must be the reason for the hold which the past has upon Europe—and also for our American inability to understand its strength. At any rate, it is certainly the platform which gives in the life of present-day France such prominence to those two characteristic phrases:

“C’est l’habitude” and “Ça m’est égal!”

“Habit and custom, m’sieu’,” plus a certain amount of stoical indifference, is sure to be called upon to serve as a pair of padded gloves for saving to the utmost those horny hands from further hurt in dealing with the sharp edges of a restrictive economic environment.

The social and moral life of France is thus the result, not so much of the passage of an extraordinary number of generations in the same physical environment with a surprisingly small admixture of foreign blood as of gener-

ations in the use of a geological equipment which has virtually required that, in self-defense, thrift be exalted to the status of a national virtue.

Unluckily for France, the loss of the iron ore of Alsace-Lorraine came just at the beginning of the expansion of our modern iron age. Added to that economic loss came the spiritual blow of disgraceful military defeat. As with individuals, so with nations. Unceasingly the main-spring desire to enjoy one's self-respect and the approval of some group causes the testing of this or that sector of its Western Front in the effort finally to discover the right spot for making the break-through into the longed for satisfaction and recognition. So at the moment when France might logically have developed the commercial tendencies common to the new age, she was divested of the material tools essential to achievement in the sector of practical, industrial realism; as a result she inevitably, though perhaps unconsciously, left at that point of the line a minimum of her interest while she directed the full reserves of her aspirations against some sector of lesser opposition and restriction. She continued, accordingly, to seek—and to find—her satisfaction in the field of quality rather than quantity, of taste and the æsthetic rather than the crude, in the intellectual and the emotional rather than the actual and material. In all this the men of the "generation of defeat" supplied with their philosophies a leadership which gave to the national choice a spiritual justification and flavor. France found happiness in remaining merely agricultural and careful in an age of industrial realism and expansion. Her fates thus forced the continued choice of a policy of holding

on rather than getting on. For always the lessening of the chance of getting increases the necessity of holding: "Will you hold fast that which I give thee?" It depends on how easy it is to get something else.

The moment, also, that this tendency to hold rather than to get begins to make society fixed and static, the importance of social position increases. As noted in Belgium, the son fears to cast himself off from his father's financial protection and so accepts his family's obligations for the sake both of his own and his sister's social standing. Thus, the polite thing in Belgium and France is always to address a young woman of marriageable age as "Madame" instead of "Miss" as with us—to give her, as it were, the benefit of the social doubt by virtue of which unmarried women of twenty-five are in France considered "old maids."

Follows naturally enough on all this the French attitude toward the advertiser in particular and the business man in general. For him to go too far in accepting the risks always connected with the employment of both brains and capital—connected to an extent, incidentally, seldom appreciated by the hand worker—is to fly in the face of the national—the nationally *defensive*—insistence upon "holding fast." His good citizenship is fairly questionable for the reason that his future is so much so. On the other hand, the holder of a local or Federal office—at one-fifth the commercial risk-taker's earnings—his *present* earnings, of course—has a social prestige which nothing can break. The reason is that nothing short of scandal can cause him to "let go."

So the institution of marriage—up to 1918, at least—

has had to throw up its hands and surrender before the insistent demands for social and economic security as made upon it by the public opinion of a people long organized on a narrow-margined economy. Under the circumstances, wife and husband cannot afford to risk their futures simply for the privilege of being in love with each other. If one of them has social position and the other has money, that is enough. This is the cause of the "*marriage à quatre*." It leaves both husband and wife free—with the help of two outside friends and a certain amount of discretion—to maintain a secure and respectable domestic establishment, and raise the children without being too much bored with each other. Under such circumstances the position of the husband is decidedly different from that, say, of a young American business man. As a functionary with a life-hold on his highly honorable position, and married to a comfortable income, he need expend on his work comparatively little of the energy which the American would put into developing the full possibilities of his business. Where the first is able to find little chance for the satisfaction of overcoming obstacles and solving problems, the other sees the opportunity that challenges most of his physical, mental, and spiritual capacities. The one's future is already made; the other's waits upon his effort. The one will, therefore, be interested in finding some new and challenging sector in which to obtain the satisfactions of fresh victories; the other will have found it. Something like this appears to me to fit the matter of sex into our picture, and to explain the origin of the art seen so generally in French life—the art of philandering. It is a development in the

field of morals out of that same national narrowness of material resources and economic opportunities. It is a sort of "reverse English" of that economic determinism which was at one time felt to push so many girls here in America into prostitution.

In much the same way I found here in America that among the laborers the narrowness of opportunity for self-expression and achievement on the muscle jobs caused an increased interest in the possibilities for them as offered in the field of sex relationships. Among the French working men, naturally, marriages are not arranged upon the basis of economic security. But even there the problem of morals is complicated by the social permissions and approvals which make entirely commonplace a bit of gossip regarding the highest government officials and their mistresses.

These social concomitants of established economic conservatism and age undoubtedly help to explain, also, the French attitude toward certain matters in which we see sex but in which old people everywhere see nothing but physiology. They serve also to create France's most serious problem—namely, the narrowness of the margin between the births and deaths of her population.

But all this applies only to the France that this generation has known. That France is gone. The war has erased it. In its place is the France that stands upon an entirely different platform of material equipment—the France that now wears the crown of the "Iron Queen of Europe"—the France of hope.

Will these riches now added to her extensive colonial domain enable her to become a first-rate instead of a

fourth-rate industrial power? Will those long-established, close-margined habits of yesterday stand in her way or help her to fulfil the hopes of to-day and to-morrow? Can she sell all the products she is now equipped to make? Nothing means more to the workers of France than the answers to these questions. On these answers, for one thing, may depend the length of time to be spent in France by the present thousands of laborers from the Algerian and Moroccan colonies and from Poland, Italy, Spain, and elsewhere.

These queries are hard to answer, but it is worth remembering that with a people as with a person no trait is a mere "happen-stance." Each is part of a consistent whole. The backbone that yesterday held together the France the world has known is gone. But as a result the French people is far from lazy and far from inept in the fullest possible utilization of all its resources, sparse or abundant. Thanks to its long training, it has demonstrated that it can hang on to a spiritual ideal when any nation of a different environment might have given up. So no one who has seen the combination of demoralized actuality and devoted aspiration pictured at ruined but reviving Lens can be anything but optimistic about France's ability to meet her newest possibilities and fulfil them. Her centuries of habit in faithfulness over yesterday's little now justify the hope of her faithfulness over to-day's much. It is only necessary for her friends—or her enemies—to be patient. She has been sorely wounded and sorely wearied. She has not yet recovered from the shell-shock of her testing at the very centre of the world's worst wrenching. The idealists who went through the

war are perhaps spending too much time endeavoring to determine with exactness whether her wounds are mortal, chronic, or merely temporary. Meanwhile, in the young men born too late to see full service at the front there is appearing the "generation of the victory." Instead of devoting themselves to cinching the honorable and permanent—honorable because permanent—position of a Federal functionary, they are insisting upon going into business. That is causing trouble in the families, but it will be the families that will give way and not the youths. For it is they who have on their side all the thrust of France's future.

There is a real possibility that these young men will give to the factory, office, and the banking-room exactly that touch of idealism which business so much needs. It is something of this that we Americans have put into industry and commerce to an extent unequalled by any other nation. We have found that spirit in business because we have had to find it somewhere, and we have not had time to look elsewhere. The French have found it outside of business because they did not care to find anything in business except what was necessary to existence. It would be immensely helpful to the world's peace if France's "generation of the victory" could avail to combine the practical and the ideal in a new and higher species of business technic. That might go far not only toward solving the labor problem, but also toward preventing a revival of the war-like spirit among the nations—a spirit which can be expressed even during naval holidays by the knife-point of cutthroat competition.

In this, however, one factor is always to be considered. Its name is Germany.

The same years which saw France accepting material contraction and accomplishing spiritual elaboration, saw Germany's "generation of the victory" utilizing to the utmost her expanded natural resources and her possibilities of both productive and distributive service. In the effort to keep her workers from radicalism the government offered the compromise of a conservative Socialism which did not greatly protect the laborer from the restrictions of a pretty narrow sheet. But, especially in view of the shortness of the German people's life as a unit in comparison with the French, the industrial and economic factors appear to me to call for a considerable admixture of the political in order to explain the development which led to the great catastrophe. To be sure, Germany's astounding industrial expansion produced a growth in population which made its established borders extremely narrow. Nevertheless, this might have been made fairly harmless except for Germany's distressing observation that the achievement of her commercial success failed for some reason to secure from the other peoples of the world the hoped-for appreciation and recognition of German greatness. We are most sensitive in those areas of our self-respect where we most desperately desire recognition, but are least certain of our right to it. Undoubtedly, the newness of the empire and the suddenness of its exploits produced the same touchiness in this regard as is still evinced in the tender political sensibilities of the newest and least stable South and Central American Republics. This touchiness would



hardly fail to be increased by the sight of France and the French spirit continuing to enjoy the spiritual leadership and homage of the world in spite of military and material eclipse. Well, if the shaking of the shekels does not appear to make any impression on the grand stand, why not try the rattling of the sabre!

If to-day the mind of the sabre rattler were gone from Germany, it would be easy to discuss the future. Unhappily, every morning's paper and every fresh murder of a progressive make it more certain that it is still there. Luckily, however, other minds are there, too—some that would earn the world's confidence by demonstrated worthiness, others that, as in France a generation ago, would forsake the world of commerce and delve deeper into the intangibilities of the spirit. Time will show the result of all these highly active forces. The pity is that in July of '22, as in September of '21, it is impossible for any one to say with authority that France—or Europe—has no justification for its fear of the cloud upon its eastern horizon. Like all significant clouds it is the size of a man's hand—and takes the form of a man's fist. As long as it is visible, it means a French army—in the absence of other guarantees. That army, I believe with all my heart, does not at all represent a military people. In any event, the taxes for its support only give still another twist to that noose of limitation upon the lives of its hard-working narrow-margined citizens.

Under these conditions the horny hands of France—as of Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and for that matter the rest of Europe—cannot hope immediately to get far away from those hampered elbows in the narrow room which nature has provided.

It is the meagre equipment of that room which in times past has aggravated the pressure everywhere against those narrow walls. In the days before commerce could disregard such merely geographical boundaries by means of its ability to find its markets and establish its relations everywhere, these walls led men inevitably to the use of the sword. The crape that followed the monarch's military effort to overcome nature's geographical narrowness and so to escape from this or that valley or highland became thus the established accompaniment of the denim of the heavy toil required for overcoming nature's geological "nearness." The supreme tragedy is that the tendency toward the levelling of geographic and political boundaries which modern high-speed and world-wide business is exerting, did not proceed fast enough to control the new tendency toward commercial and political expansion which also resulted from that same institution of modern business and its world-conquering tools of communication.

It is not fanciful to consider the French Revolution as one result of a failure to control and direct the expansion of the business and political life of France which followed upon the increase in the means of communication within the nation. Such commerce as existed came to the point where its development required it to operate upon a national basis. It found that its political machinery was equipped only to oppose this. Its new cross-country currents of relations encountered the resistance of a maze of local taxes, local prohibitions—regional restrictions of every sort. The heat caused by this resistance might long have gone without exploding in the demand for a reformed government which would widen the field of

operations, except that this same commercial expansion brought with it the increased means of communication and therefore of a national public opinion. This provided for the first time the means of that united expression which is essential to united action—and the revolution was on!

Similarly, it is not fanciful to see in the Great War the result of the energy generated by the resistance of the opposing walls of the various political cells of old Europe against the flow of the powerful currents of the new world-wide commerce and of the new world-wide public opinion.

If that is true, the enormously increased forces of both international trade and international self-respect are sure to increase the wearers of both crape and denim unless they can somehow and in some measure be controlled. Small wonder that our "Bolshie" friend in South Wales sees so close a connection between the world's conferences and the world's barricades. And as a wearer of the universal crape and denim, he is entitled to protest that *either* conference or barricade—that organization at either the top or the bottom—*must* be tried as an outlet from the meagreness of living and the commonness of mourning which Europe to-day presents.

Small wonder, too, that Europe's workers hate the bayonets which, as the signs and symbols of Europe's "elbow complex," have come inevitably to dot the "i's" and cross the "t's" of age-old limitation. Nor that with all their hearts they hope—though they are too tired fully to expect—that the forces which make for the horny hands of their work and the hampered elbows

of their life, may somehow be better directed than heretofore!

Can that be done?

On the answer to that question, surely, depends the future of Europe and of Europe's worker-citizens.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE (DIS)UNITED STATES OF EUROPE?

TOWARD the answer to that question, the war has contributed surprisingly.

Besides affording a demonstration of the astonishing possibilities of both international co-operation and international conflict, and in addition to developing instruments of communication far beyond the level earlier developed by business, the universal call to arms demonstrated to the workers the unreliability of that long-discussed horizontal cleavage by which the labor groups of the different nations would fight, not against each other but only against the employer and other more fortunate groups similarly united throughout the world.

"So well established did the theory of class, instead of national, solidarity appear before the war," so explained a French labor statesman, "that all estimates of our military strength when completely mobilized included considerable deductions for the Socialists and others who, it was believed, would make unsafe soldiers. When the test came, even the government was surprised. It found the percentage an extremely small one—practically negligible. Furthermore, it proved quite unnecessary to carry out the long-contemplated plans for the arrest of certain leaders who were expected to impede mobiliza-

tion. In the moment of invasion these, like all the others, came into the army ready to defend their homes."

The same was true of other countries. As a result, the question of some measure of control of the international currents is to-day a question not of the destruction of national political lines and boundaries, but merely of dulling the edges of those boundaries by some sort of permanent economic and social confederation such as is represented at this moment in general type if not in degree, by the League of Nations (now that the President's Conference has taken no continuing or permanent form).

Is that possible or impossible?

It has been quite common to place the blame for the present high tension of the various nationalistic antagonisms and competitions of Europe and the rest of the world on the diplomats who assembled for the making of the Versailles Treaty. That means that we view these gentlemen as if they had arisen, uncaused, unfathered, full-panoplied with all their shifty wiles and whisperings, out of some unruffled sea. That view has the advantage of saving the faces of us all by freeing our shoulders completely from whatever errors time may have shown to follow their decisions. The trouble is that it misses what is immensely closer to the facts—namely, that these diplomats were and are little more than the employees of their peoples and the spokesmen of the hatreds, fears, and hopes engendered in the hearts of those peoples by the long past, and intensified by the recent, conflict.

At the conference, in point of fact, President Wilson was the only one who was free to express his own personal idealism, and then devote the rest of his term to

proving its value to his public. Every other representative could be forced out of the meeting and out of the leadership of his country within twenty-four hours after agreeing in spoken or written word to anything, large or small, which happened to be repugnant to the feelings of his constituency at the moment, however wise it might come to appear in the course of a few weeks, months, or years. That is simply to say that the forces for the making of the treaty were precisely the same forces which to-day exist for the making—or the marring—of the world's future, peaceful or otherwise, organized or unorganized—namely, the feelings of the peoples involved.

“But I must add, with the consent of my colleagues, that the policy which I have endeavored to set forth just now was in actuality the policy of the British Empire yesterday morning at ten o'clock.” So Earl Balfour is reported to have replied with a smile in a meeting where his explanation was stopped by his Prime Minister.

The particular form in which these emotions will express themselves is impossible to predict. But the mainsprings beneath these particular forms are not likely greatly to change for some time, for the reason that these mainsprings are emotions which were tempered to their present fixity in the heat of the highest conceivable intensity—the intensity which always follows when mortal and uttermost threat is made against the very life of a person or a group. So it may help toward the answer to our query if we merely catalogue those underlying feelings from which the near future is sure to result:

First, France's fear for her life at the hands of Germany unless protection by others can somehow be made fairly certain.

Second, Germany's concentration of her hurt pride and fear for her own national existence in her hatred of France.

Third, the hunger of both the British worker and the British capitalist for the wages and profits of a normal, buying world.

Fourth, the hankering of Russia's people for the square meals of normalcy as soon as these can be secured without the loss of the face—and, perhaps, the lives—of the leaders.

Fifth, the nationalistic instincts of self-preservation on the part of Austria, Hungary, and the Balkans.

Sixth, the political-religious instinct of self-esteem on the part of the Moslem and Hindu worlds.

Seventh, the wish of America to retain her traditional political aloofness if this can be done without serious hurt to her commercial pre-eminence.

War weariness and war hatred intensify all these, but unfortunately may almost as easily cause as prevent war. For the first of these two means the touchiness of the high explosive of "tiredness and temper." The second is only a hatred of war *in general*. Unluckily, nobody ever goes off to fight a war in general. It is always a war in particular—against a particular adversary and for the redress of a particular wrong or hurt. Due nationalistic emphasis upon that particular grievance can undoubtedly be expected, for a long time to come, to secure all the cannon fodder—yes, all the *voluntary* cannon fodder—needed.

Something like these appear to me the emotions from which must be worked out somehow the future behavior of the world. But how, then, can such a mass of oppos-



ing instincts be worked into a going and concerted programme that will give some measure of expectation for the larger and less hampered opportunities and securities so much prayed for?

Well, if our original thesis is true, that we *live* ourselves into our thinking infinitely more than we *think* ourselves into our living, then there is no possibility of finding our way into an organized world by preliminary argument or reason. Nothing is more futile than for any one of these peoples to try to convince the other that its particular fear or wish is altogether groundless. There the emotion is—the actual and unavoidable residuum of actual and unavoidable experience and life. The argument of such emotions and the argument of logic simply do not meet. The only way is to find at once, on some sector or other, every possible opportunity to think and feel co-operation by first experiencing and living it.

What, then, are the fields and the forces in the present actual and unavoidable living of the world's day-by-day life which tend, consciously or unconsciously, to lessen the intensity of those antagonizing emotions and so to propel the world's life in the direction of the indispensable co-operative feelings?

Surely, the first of these is that modern platform of world-wide publicity and opinion—that world-wide stage on which to enjoy the sense of national self-respect in relationship with the other national actors. Even though this went far to cause the recent war, nevertheless, its further development is certain to make other wars more difficult because, as its power grows, it tends to make bayonets unnecessary and victories resultless.

Second, and closely allied with that, is the unity of culture in the spread of the practices and conventions of a common industrial and social life.

Third, the "self-determination of raw materials," and the exchange and interdependence which these require, aided by—

Fourth, the "self-determination" of both profits and wages as a force toward simplifying the political as well as the commercial processes of this exchange and interdependence—the pressure of "big business" and "overhead" in the direction of removing all possible friction to the flow of goods throughout the widest possible markets. This the war has demonstrated to be most profitably gained, not by force but by the competition of economic service.

Just as in our nation-wide commerce the recent experience with child labor has forced more and more consideration of the Federal Government as the only effective means of preventing the backwardness of one State from working harm to others as well as itself, so both profits and wages everywhere are seeing that the existence of a world market on any basis of fairness requires the help of some middle and inclusive organization. Just as, also, each national unit has found a policy of "*Laissez faire*," unfair in practice unless modified by public opinion, so every fresh development of the competitive warfare is certain to produce a world-wide opinion favoring and requiring some sort of central referee. Furthermore, the post-war unemployment has demonstrated as never before to every group of workers that its wages depend upon both the continued and the expanding ability of

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other groups of workers elsewhere about the world to buy the products of their hands and hours. Without such a "creative evolution in business," the whole machine of civilization comes to a dead stop.\*

Fifth: The "United States of Great Britain" as an accomplished "Commonwealth of Nations," now furnishes daily the world's most active and going demonstration of a political, social, and economic federation, which involves one-fifth the total population of the globe.

Sixth: The increased solidarity of Christendom, in response to the religious-political threat referred to.

Seen or unseen, these forces are now influencing the daily living of tens of millions and they are bound to influence their thinking and their feeling. Avoiding the field of argument, these forces work daily upon those supernationalistic attitudes and emotions by calling forth such mechanisms of peace as the League's Barcelona transit conference for facilitating traffic on bodies of water which serve groups of nations. In their attrition upon these attitudes and emotions, however, "time is of the essence": the sure results must not be expected too quickly. On the other hand, the concentric forces of modern business and communications are so recent as compared with the ages of comparative isolation and insulation, and are multiplying themselves in such geometric ratio, that a wireless year may easily prove more resultful in changing men's lives and attitudes than a post-chaise century.

Gladstone has defined the spirit of conservatism and Toryism as "the distrust of the people qualified by fear,"

\* See "Full Up and Fed Up," pp. 308-317.

as opposed to the liberal's "trust in the people qualified by prudence." Oddly enough, Europe feels to-day that one of the most puzzling of all obstacles to world organization is this "distrust of the people"—of *other* peoples—as represented by history's greatest democracy. By our assumption that other nations are not to be trusted, we Americans endeavor to rationalize our wish to stand aloof. The real difficulty is doubtless much the same as that which keeps the bookworm off the dance floor—the feeling of inferiority in one sector as compared with that of comfortable pre-eminence in another. Perfectly sure of ourselves at home and at work, we cannot yet overcome our embarrassment on the platform of world-wide politics to which our commercial success tends unmistakably to draw us. Our behavior is thus the result of that comparative inexperience with and ignorance of other peoples which has been the natural result of our development.

It may more easily prove to be the cause of a great World War than we imagine. To be sure, that outcome is inconceivably distant from our mind or purpose. But we embark upon a highly dangerous career the moment we assume that the cause of all war is ill-will. For the very next moment we feel free to reach the infinitely more dangerous assumption that the certainty of our *mood* of peace—our friendliness toward all mankind—completely justifies a virtual refusal to co-operate with others in the *mechanisms* of peace. But the cause of war, whether between nation and nation, or employer and employee, is not ill-will. It is ignorance. For ignorance leads to the desire for mental and spiritual isolation—the

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avoidance of that sense of inferiority which follows contact with those we do not understand. With spiritual isolation in the unavoidable presence of the unknown, comes always fear. That fear unfailingly thrusts toward armament—and that thrust remains even after all the neighborhood's acquaintances and strangers have met about the conference table and agreed to restrict their armament to certain ratios. After armament, in turn, comes arrogance: the man whose fear of his unknown neighbor makes him carry an according-to-ratio 32-caliber automatic can never understand why he should be expected to show conciliation—especially when he knows that his neighbor carries only a 22. It was a Greek tragedian who long ago described the next and final step—especially for those who add to isolation and armament the vastest aggregation of wealth and temporal power the ages have ever known:

"Always presumption blossoms  
And the fruit is doom  
And all the harvest tears."

The first step toward war is always taken by the politician or the employer—or labor leader—the moment he assumes that either his good-will or his ill-will makes it either kind or safe for him to remain ignorant of the hopes and fears at the bottom of his neighbor's heart.

Luckily the Golden Rule may be expected to work as successfully for the new and vastly complicated and enlarged relationships of the radio era as for the old; but only if we see in that rule the challenge to a new emphasis. As rapidly as the wireless and the turbine expand

the word "neighbor," so rapidly it becomes necessary to understand the futility of mere good-will. In the old days we lived so closely to "the other fellow" that with the help of a moment's sympathetic imagination we could hope to put ourselves into his shoes and so feel free to decide how he would wish to "be done by." But to-day! How is our imagination to know the heart of a neighbor whose life daily affects our own, but who lives and moves at vast psychological distances away from us, across the ocean—or perhaps in the coal town or the steel plant only a few blocks or miles away? As never before, good-will is helpless and awkward unless directed by intelligence based upon long effort in collecting facts and interpreting them with sympathy. Neither of these two can displace the other. With either of them alone, feelings may be hurt, and the hurt feelings of a group's injured or threatened self-respect will always serve—and always *should* serve—as the vestibule to war until their healing can be made possible by somewhat the same arrangements as individuals have contrived to set up and operate for themselves. The hope of the world's peace is that the great majority of the new fields and forces of our modern living are pushing harder in the direction of both intelligence and good-will—and the arrangements they call for—than are the older forces which oppose them. That does not mean that there may not be new wars, nor that there is no need to hurry! Time is on the side of the centripetal forces—if only the centrifugal do not bring destruction before time has its decent chance!

But this larger admixture of information and facts for

guiding our feelings does not by any means lessen the need of that initial spark of pure good-will by which its possessor makes bold—with nothing but the strength of faith—to enter into closer relations with the still unknown neighbor. It is the tragedy of our day-by-day existence as individuals that the weariness of our bodies so often hinders the turning of our feet into this path of hope at just the moment when that turning is most vital to our soul's salvation. Considering the colossal depletion of both her body and her spirit the marvel is that Europe has already turned as far as she has in the direction of peace. The question of her successfully making the corner appears to me to depend upon this query: Is America willing to express the spiritual and material wealth of her comparative freedom from fatigue by one comparatively simple but highly and nobly challenging step?

“Neither the steady jobs and, so, the steady life and steady thought and feeling you speak of can come in England—nor the absence of fear in France and elsewhere—until Germany is more settled. And that cannot come until the reparations matter is reconsidered.” So an astute statesman in Washington replied recently: “But the reparations question cannot be modified with the consent of France until her obligations to us can also be modified—and you or any one else who has seen the destruction of France's homes and its means of livelihood can realize how properly she comes to consider Germany's debts to her quite as definite and as essential as we consider her debt to us—in fact, infinitely more so. Now we here in official Washington favor some modification

of France's and of all the allied debts to us on the understanding that Germany also will benefit. But we do not believe the American public will listen to any such proposal—not at this moment. In six months we hope that everybody here will see that it is just as impossible for France to pay all her debts to us as for Germany to pay France—and that, therefore, we might just as well get the credit of being a kindly dispositioned creditor. We would lose nothing in actual cash and probably gain much in good-will. But for the moment at least, the administration believes itself hamstrung—and so the world's impasse continues.”

After a very wide range of contact with public opinion in this country, I believe that the view-point of the vast majority of our fellow citizens is about like this:

“Yes, I'd be for doing the fair thing in this matter of reparations and debts. I'm for forgetting the war—for getting busy again. And if our assurance and action would help them to lessen their armament and get busy, then I'm for it. But of course I wouldn't propose this—not just now—because the people I know—well, they're a hard-boiled crowd, you know, and they're against it—and will be for, maybe, six months.”

I believe that as a whole, the Land of Getting On and the Continent of Hope—of hope justified by more than a century of hope fulfilled—stands to-day more than willing to give to the Land of Denim and Crape and to the Continent of Fear—of fear justified by centuries of fear fulfilled—that demonstration of co-operation which is needed to speed the forces now working surely but slowly to restore the equilibrium of peace and organized



steady work and business. Certainly such aid will assist enormously to the happiness of all the millions of owners of those horny hands and hampered elbows. But every day which decreases our material resources or increases our communications with the lands of already decreased treasures, brings nearer the time when it will be ourselves who will suffer from the same restrictions of the disappearing furniture and the contracting room of the crowded world.

"In a couple of minutes, sir, we'll be a-mikin' 'istory, won't we, sir?" the sergeant whispered to the captain who stood watch in hand, waiting for the zero hour's signal to go over the top.

"History? History be hanged!" returned the captain. "What we've got to do to-day is to make *geography*."

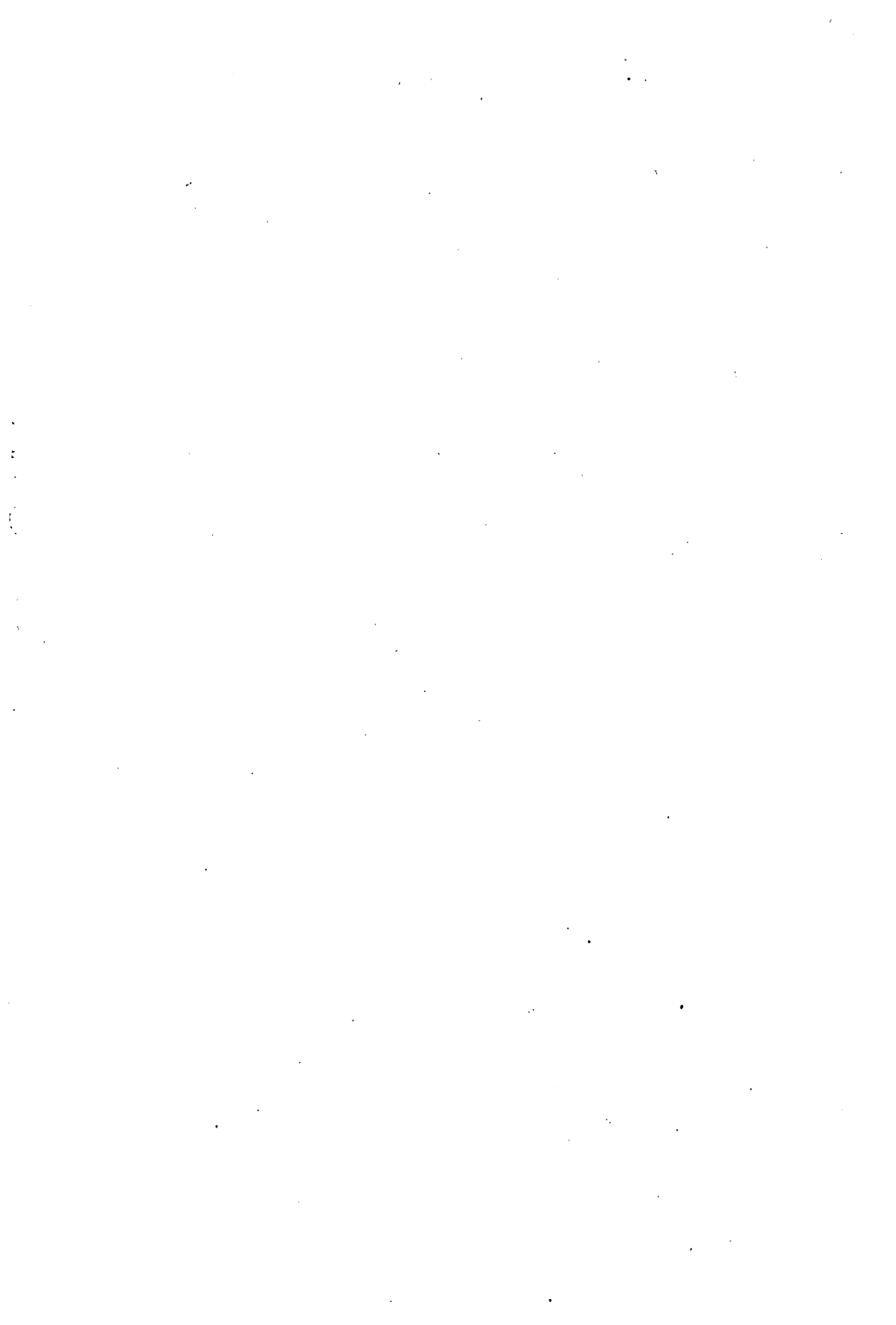
It is not so much American idealism as the good sense made possible by our life in one of the world's comparatively unwearied and hopeful areas that, more than any other single force, can hasten the coming of the—comparatively speaking—"United States of Europe." That will make history, indeed, but it will also be the only conceivable assurance of our own peace and safety, now that the Atlantic Ocean has become so completely useless as a shock-absorber.

Sentiment, however, is always a greater and, in the long run, a better, mainspring to action—and especially to difficult action—than sense. So the motive that will finally—and shortly—persuade us to stop scolding and to commence demonstrating to Europe our best combination of both good-will and intelligence—of sense and sym-

pathy—will not be our cold-blooded “horse-sense.” It will be our sentiment, our wish—our traditional, national wish—to continue to earn our right, not to the world’s trade but to its good opinion of us as a nation of practical idealists whose joy is that we helped to win a spiritual as well as a military victory on Flanders Field:

“Like the Catholic man who hath mightily won  
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain:  
Sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain.”







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